

# CURFEW ON OLYMPUS

BY G. N. MOLESWORTH

*Afghanistan* 1919

# *Curfew* *on* *Olympus*

by

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C.S.I., C.B.E.



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## Preface

The Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea.  
The ploughman homewards plods his weary way

SELECTING A title for a work is even more difficult than writing it. I thought, at first, to call this "Lest we forget", but that is too hackneyed. Later, it seemed to me that the first stanza of Thomas Gray's "Elegy" was more appropriate to the decline and fall of British Rule in India, with the crepuscular suggestions.

In olden times the Curfew came with the close of day, when the twilight turned to dark, the evening prayers had been said, lights and fires were extinguished in the villages and the people, perhaps with thankfulness after the day's toil, betook themselves to the Land of Dreams. So the day came to its close in India.

I am not looking for trouble, so I hesitate to connect anyone with Gray's "lowing herd". Those who wish can place the cap where they think it fits. I own up to being a "weary ploughman". My grandfather, father, two uncles and myself, spent an aggregate of 135 years in the service of India in various fields. As the last of us to "plod home", I did so without any regrets, though some sadness, with the knowledge that some of our work had been well done and a feeling of satisfaction that such foundations as we had left would prove strong enough for others to build on in the future.

I have made no attempt to dabble in political questions, which have been dealt with, *ad nauseam*, by well-informed scribes. As a soldier, I had no hand in such matters, for a soldier is only the instrument of the policy of others and is well-advised to keep clear of such controversies. I have only tried to convey some of my impressions—perhaps from a very narrow angle—of events and trends during the years of twilight though, at times, I became involved in great decisions.

Thus, this sketch of humans and humanities over 30 years may

provide a different and, perhaps, nostalgic perspective to that fateful period.

For many reasons an author cannot tell all he knows about personalities, nor about himself. That is a quandary which always presents itself. Thus the picture is never quite complete and, where there is a gap, the reader must rely on guesswork. He may be right, or he may be wrong.

G. N. MOLESWORTH

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BOOK I

*Angelus*

"A devotional exercise . . . at noon, and  
sunset at the sound of a bell."

## *The Old Order*

"November 21, 1913. 6.0 am: Hired Transport SOUDAN docked at Karachi. Unloading baggage and disembarking battalion. Cool breeze and very dusty. 3.30 pm. Left in first train with advance party and A and B Companies for Quetta, about a 600 mile Journey."

So reads my diary for the day on which I set foot for the second time in India as a Second Lieutenant in the 2nd Battalion, The Somerset Light Infantry. My first arrival in India was when I first drew breath and, as I left at the age of two years, I do not remember anything about it.

We had arrived from a two-year tour of duty in Peking and Tientsin. Originally we had been bound for a station in Bengal. But my Commanding Officer was a very keen and able soldier, whose only thought was for the North-west Frontier and the possibility of active service. Thus he "pulled strings" and our destination was changed to Quetta. How dangerous it is to seek to fiddle with Fate! Had we gone to Bengal we would have been sent overseas in 1914 and the lives of all of us would have taken a different course.

The journey to Quetta and our arrival there came to most of us as a shock, though Quetta was, then, one of the finest Cantonments in India, some 5000 feet above sea level, with an equable climate all the year round and free from many of the insect and water-borne diseases of India proper. We had, however, come from such places as Malta and the Chinese Treaty Ports where there were stone, or brick-built houses and barracks, electric lights, tarmaced roads, refrigeration and European shops and amenities. In fact, an advanced state of modern civilisation. We found India still in the era of Kipling's "Soldiers Three" and "Plain tales from the Hills." Mud built bungalows and barracks with corrugated iron, or thatch-

ed roofs, oil lamps, hand-pulled punkahs in summer, ice-boxes, horse-drawn traps and tongas, no public transport, dusty and bumpy roads, indifferent shops with indifferent wares in the bazar, food which was below the standard of the Far East, "thunder-boxes" and the perpetual smell of the ubiquitous incinerator borne on the dusty breeze. We had a lot to learn.

Yet Quetta was, perhaps, the most modernised Cantonment in the whole of India, the Headquarters of the Agent to the Governor General in Baluchistan and of the 4th (Quetta) Division. It had a delightful Mall, with a tan riding track, shaded by large poplars; the residences of high Political and Military Officers, set in shaded gardens; an excellent Officers Club; a Race course enclosing Polo Grounds; a Golf Course with "browns" and a Pack of Hounds. The roads were well laid out and the bungalows for officers, set in gardens with fruit trees, watered by irrigation streams. Outside the Cantonment was the Staff College enclave, with its main buildings and bungalows for students and staff, well supplied with fruit trees and gardens.

The barracks for troops, both British and Indian, varied in quality; some were very good, others were not. Quetta owed much to the initiative and drive of General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien. He was responsible for the lines we occupied, with a large two-storeyed "Institute" containing Canteen, Coffee-bar, Reading and Games rooms. He, also, built a large Soldier's Club for British troops, with the same amenities mentioned above, as well as a large hall for concerts and dramatic shows, all surrounded by playing fields for recreation. He also improved some of the lines for Indian troops and their married families. It must have been an uphill struggle, for it was terribly difficult to get money for such projects and it is remarkable how much he was able to do. Others, also, helped with amenities for the troops, and mention must be made of the Sandys Soldiers Home, run by two middle-aged ladies, who gave the nostalgic soldier a "homely" atmosphere which was never abused.

Quetta is a queer place and bears little resemblance to India proper. Baluchistan, where it lies, was "leased territory" belonging to the Khan of Kalat and was "administered" up to the Durand Line, which was the frontier with Afghanistan. It is really part of

the North-west Frontier tract and the Pathan tribes who inhabit it are closely allied to those across the border in Afghanistan. But, after years of the "Sandeman Policy" and light administration, coupled with a civil Police Force and a corps of irregular Levies, they remained fairly peaceful although still armed. They have never been of the same fighting value as the Frontier tribes northwards from the Gomal River, which is the border between Baluchistan and Waziristan.

As a result of this tribal atmosphere and the proximity of Afghanistan with Afghan traders and the huge bi-yearly migration through the area of nomadic Afghan tribes, there was practically no Indian community in Quetta, with the exception of a few shop-keepers and traders and subordinate Indian officials employed by the political officers and the police. Thus there was little opportunity to meet Indians of similar social standing nor, since "Indianization" was not then thought of, were there any Commissioned Indian Officers to meet at the Club. I remember Mr. Patel, a Parsi gentleman who owned the St. John's Flour Mills and had a large house, garden and a swimming pool—which was a rarity. He also had a very pretty daughter, who used to drive out, with her mother, in a carriage and pair in the evenings. They were very hospitable and, I believe, the daughter married an officer in the Indian Medical Service.

I also knew a certain Captain Samad Shah, in the Political Department; a queer character, of Afghan descent and a drug-addict. He was a most amusing person and with his intimate knowledge of the tribesmen and their customs, taught me much. Years later, when I was an Instructor at the Staff College, he asked me if I would examine the Persian Consul in Quetta, (Mr. Abool Hussein Khan Meftar) in Political Economy for his promotion examination, which he had to pass for a higher post. What Samad Shah told Mr. Meftar about me I do not know, but the Persian Government seemed to think I was a Professor! At any rate they agreed.

Political Economy is a subject of which I am entirely ignorant, but that did not deter me. I duly set a paper, asked Mr. Meftar to come to the Staff College, locked him in a Hall of Study for 2 hours and then collected his answers. I hope he knew something of the subject, for he covered many sheets in Persian which

I could not read. I passed him with "honours" 80 per cent marks. I then sent a report, with the Examination Paper, but not the answers, to the Persian Government and I presume Mr. Meftar got his promotion, for, many years later, someone of that name became Persian Finance Minister. I did not even get a letter of thanks for my trouble. But I expect that Samad Shah got some "gratification", for he was not a person to miss much.

Perhaps the only place where one could meet Indian gentlemen, on the level, was in Lodge McMahon, founded by Sir Henry McMahon. Here I met Rai Bahadur Diwan Jamiat Rai, of the Political Department, who was my friend for many years.

I was always very keen on shikar, both with rifle and shotgun. At Christmas, 1913, I went with a friend to shoot Oorial on Zarghun, a hill near Quetta. We got caught in a blizzard and, coming down, I suffered an injury which laid me up for some time. As I was not getting much better in the cold of a Baluchistan winter, I was given a month's sick-leave to go to the plains of India to convalesce. I knew nothing of India, or where to go, but selected Agra, as I hoped to get accommodation with the unit there. When I reached Agra I found there was no accommodation available so I had to go to a hotel. I had very little money and could not afford the Cecil Hotel, run by the Hotz family, so obtained a room at Lawrie's, which was un-pretentious. I could not walk far, so would take a tonga either to the Fort to sit in the Anguri Bagh, or to the Taj Mahal, where I used to spend much of the day sitting in the garden. The Taj is one of the wonders of the world. I have not seen many of the others, but I think it must be the most beautiful. Its perfect proportions, the cool marble and *minakari*, the formal Mogul garden with the basins of water and the atmosphere of peace, left an indelible memory. It is a monument which "grows on one", like an acquired taste which improves with every sampling.

It was the custom, then, for a Scots battalion to be stationed at Agra and to hold a Highland gathering there, each Spring, to which men from other Scots battalions in India came for Highland Games and dancing. I soon learned that there was to be a Torchlight Tattoo one evening at the Fort, at which the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, was to be present. Invitation was by "ticket", and I had no chance of getting one, but I determined to see it by hook

or crook. After much cogitation, on the appointed evening, I put on my Mess Kit and buckled on my steel-scabbarded sword, with the gold slings. Thus accoutred I took a tonga and presented myself at the gate of the Fort.

The Sergeant of the Guard saluted smartly and ushered me in without question. Once inside, I hesitated, not knowing quite where to go, when a Viceregal A.D.C., evidently thinking I was some sort of Orderly Officer, took me up to an excellent seat on the walls, close to the Viceregal Party. The Tattoo was held in the Diwan-i-Khas (or Diwan-i-Am?) a large rectangular court yard, surrounded by high walls, where the spectators were seated and having in the centre a large receptacle, which was the Emperor Jehangir's Bath Tub. This was the pivot on which the evolutions of the Tattoo, the Massed Bands and Pipes and the Highland Dancing revolved. It contained an unseen Scot who, from time to time, discharged coloured squibs; which struck me as *lese majeste* and I am sure Jehangir must have turned in his grave.

After the Tattoo was over, the Viceregal Party moved off to supper and refreshments in the illuminated Anguri Bagh, and I followed on, accompanied by the A.D.C. The latter did not know my name (fortunately), but took me up to Lord Hardinge, mumbled something, and the Viceroy nodded to me in a friendly fashion. I had an excellent supper, but then thought it best to slip away before the rest of the party. On reaching the Main Gate, I was too late to prevent the Guard turning out to me. They evidently thought I was some form of Grand Rounds! Being fortified with a glass of champagne, I inspected them and congratulated them on their turn out after seeing that the sentry knew his orders. I then hailed a tonga and returned to my Hotel, not without some anxiety. But I heard no more of the matter.

Thus, by a slight subterfuge, I was able to see a Viceregal function at a time when Pomp and Circumstance were at their peak. It was a very smart affair, with Mess Kits, uniforms, medals and decorations and the ladies in their "best bib and tucker". Apart from the Viceregal servants, resplendent in scarlet and gold, I do not recollect seeing a single Indian face. The days of such splendour were numbered.

The Summer of 1914 passed uneventfully. Training, sports,

social functions, polo, race-meetings—the usual routine of an Indian Cantonment. I began to learn Urdu, my mentor being Lala Dittu Ram, Manager of the D.A.V. High School, a gentle old man with whom I collaborated for many years. On one occasion, to increase my knowledge, he took me to a performance of a musical party from the Gandharva Mahavidyala at which Pundit Vishnu Digambar was the principal vocalist. He was accompanied by specialists on the Sitar, Sarangi, Tabla, Dilruba and many other instruments. I fear I have never been sufficiently educated to appreciate Indian music adequately. I admit that I had two material objects in learning Urdu. First, I realised that I could not get away into the country side for shikar without some knowledge of the language; and, secondly, I had little money to play with and wanted the small award—Rs. 150—for passing the examination. This I achieved by passing the Lower Standard in 1914 and never made a better investment. I was, however, nearly defeated by the opening words of the “Unseen Passage”—*Haiwanat, Jamadat, Nabatat*. The rest of the passage was easy, but gave me no clue to the opening! Much later, when passing my Higher Standard in Baluchi, I was almost caught by the word “*plakiar*”, which I found, later, meant a “plate-layer”, a corruption from English.

In June and July storm clouds began to gather over Europe. First came the “Sarajevo Murders”, followed by mobilisation in Austria, the Balkans, Russia and Germany. Before the end of July Austria and Serbia were at war. The tension grew rapidly and, on 5th November, Britain declared war on Germany. This date, to my mind, sounded the knell of the Kiplingese conception of Empire and marks the start of the decline of British rule in India. Although we did not know it, things were never to be quite the same again. The Old Order was changing but, as yet, there was no writing visible on the wall.

## II

### *Retrospect and Prospect*

It is curious that, after so long an association with India, people in Britain, apart from those who have lived and worked there, fail to realise that it is a sub-continent, with every sub-continental characteristic. Indeed, it was not until the closing years of World War II and the operations against the Japanese in the Arakan and Assam that British journalists, naively, "discovered India".

It is largely from these fundamental misconceptions that, whenever a "global war" broke out, there was not only a demand for help from India but, subsequently, an outcry regarding India's alleged "unpreparedness and inefficiency", which was ill-deserved.

There is a description of un-veracity which lists "lies, damlies and statistics", in that order. Statistics are often both unreliable and unsatisfactory, for they can be manipulated to prove, or disprove any particular theory, or thesis. Thus, to avoid trouble, any data which follows is deliberately vague.

In 1914 India (as it then was) had an area in square miles more than the whole of Europe, *plus* Greece and the Balkan States, put together. Compared with India, Britain was like a postage stamp on a quarto envelope. Such a vast area entailed difficult problems of Central and Provincial administration and communications and these were complicated by other factors.

She had a 2000 mile coast-line which was extremely vulnerable. In spite of this only three aggressors came by sea: Arabs, Portuguese and British. In Victorian and Edwardian times, although she was not herself a sea-power, there was no threat from the sea-ward while the British Navy commanded the seas.

Her total land frontier was about 2600 miles. From the Bay of Bengal, through Assam and as far west as Kashmir, the almost impenetrable belt of mountain and forest had never been penetrated by an invader and has only permitted a trickle of trade from the north. This is one reason why the Indian peoples have never



bers who were wasted out. There was a "tradition" of service to the Sarkar, which was fiercely maintained—not unlike similar conditions which pertained in some British County Regiments. The fighting qualities of the men obtained were excellent, so why embark on any change? But in World Wars I and II, when the "martial classes" began to run dry, enlistment, perforce, had to be extended to other classes and there was no detriment to the fighting qualities of recruits. But, as a whole, the peoples of India are peace loving, have no great tradition of warlike activities. In fact, the bulk of the population does not like war, while many, according to circumstances, may be influenced adversely by religious, or other affinities.

In 1914, the Army in India was up to strength, efficient and well trained for the limited tasks it was designed to fulfil. It had had, from time to time, several "little wars" on the Western Frontier to keep it "on its toes". Its organisation and distribution for Frontier Defence and Internal Security were based on schemes formulated by Lord Roberts and, later, by Lord Kitchener; both able Commanders-in-Chief who had the welfare of the Indian Army much at heart. The latter had eliminated many of the units which were relics of the old Madras Army and which, through localisation and neglect, had deteriorated over the years.

One of the bogeys which had influenced strategic planners for many years was fear of the expansionist policy of Imperial Russia, the spread of Russian influence in Central Asia towards Afghanistan and Russian aspirations for a warm sea port on, or near, the Indian Ocean. One such objective was held to be Karachi. This fear was enhanced by the instability of various regimes in Afghanistan and the uncertain character of her well armed and fanatical tribesmen. Thus, for many years this threat had been a major military consideration and, in the time when Lord Roberts was Commander-in-Chief, the Victoria Lines, a series of fortifications, was constructed near Quetta, to bar the way for any invasion from the direction of Kandahar. Imperial Russia has passed away, but the desire for a port on the Indian Ocean may still be a long-term, opportunist aim of Communist Russia.

Some of the equipment of the Army lagged behind the requirements of those days. It was very short of all categories of artillery

and some of the artillery which existed had antiquated transport. Howitzers were obsolete and in short supply. The same applied to machine guns and the Vickers gun was only just beginning to appear for cavalry units. Transport for weapons, ammunition, baggage and supplies was "Animal" and there was a large establishment of mule, pony and camel corps. The elephant had only recently disappeared as a means of traction. Arsenal and ammunition factories were adequate for India's needs, but for little more, and the same applied to reserves of military stores of all kinds. India had, certainly, some excellent industries, for the production of clothing, cloth, tentage, boots and shoes and textiles. But these had to supply the needs of the population as well as the army. Expansion was difficult and depended, largely, on imported machinery and the provision of skilled workers. There were excellent railway workshops, but their adaptation to other needs was not easy. There was, of course, no organisation, or machinery, for mechanical transport, whether civil or military.

Training, apart from specialised training for Tribal Warfare, was on "lessons" of the fairly recent South African Campaigns and, as such, differed little from that of the British Army. War on the continent of Europe, with siege conditions, was not contemplated. "Open Warfare" was envisaged, with plenty of tasks for large formations of horsed cavalry. Much reliance, in the absence of automatic weapons, was placed on skill with the rifle, the achievement of 15 aimed shots, per man, per minute, which actually wrought havoc with the German infantry formations in 1914.

Not all units of the Indian Army reached the same high standard of efficiency. Some, but by no means all, of the Imperial Service units, maintained by the Indian States, were of little value in the field. But, by and large, the Army was ready and adequate for its limited tasks; namely, the maintenance of Law and Order, defence of the Western Frontier and suppression of incursions by Frontier tribesmen. When war came in 1914, it was called upon to undertake tasks for which it had not been designed, in alien territory which, for climatic reasons, was not best suited to Indian troops. At the same time India was called on to provide men, material and supplies on a scale which had never been contemplated, nor asked for and for which provision had not been made

in time of peace. It is not surprising that, in spite of her extraordinary efforts, there were times when she fell short of the demands made upon her.

### III

## *The Coming of War*

*August 5th 1914:* The news of the Declaration of War reached us about 6.00 p.m. Everyone went wild with excitement. It was Guest Night at our Mess at Seven Streams. The Band was there, as usual, and played the Marseillaise when the Royal Toast was drunk. Many of the men had come across from the barracks to listen, and so the Band continued with Rule Britannia and various patriotic tunes amid great cheering.

After dinner, a party from the 27th Light Cavalry arrived in their regimental coach-and-four and toasts were drunk to the victory of the Allies and the confusion of the Kaiser. Taking the Band we all went over to the Brigade Commander's house nearby, to serenade him. He had gone to bed, but came out on the verandah in his pyjamas—not a little annoyed. His lawn had just been irrigated and we sank into it ankle deep. Somewhat damped—morally and physically—we went up to the Gurkha Messes and the Staff College. The former joined in celebrations, but the Staff College students had gone to bed and refused to get up.

In my diary that evening I wrote: "This is excellent news. . . . Germany could not have chosen a worse time for herself. . . . Our fleet of 400 vessels is already mobilised for the King's Review at Spithead; with Russia on one side and France on the other. Germany has bitten off more than she can chew. . . . The Divisional Staff here vary between 2 months and a year for the duration of the war. . . . I only hope we get there in time to take part before it is over. . . . If the Entente suffers reverses at first trouble is expected in India. Turkey's action will have a great effect on the Muslim population." I was very young when I wrote that and had forgotten, or did not know, what a small contribution the British Expeditionary Force could make to the Allied cause. But that was the general outlook at the time and we little knew what lay in store for us.

I have often wondered why there was such initial enthusiasm for the War. In 1939 things were very different. In 1914 I think the feelings of the British troops were understandable. Kaiser Wilhelm had been sabre-rattling and making offensive remarks for some time. There had been the Agadir incident, among others. The British felt that this had got to stop and it was time that a halt was called to German arrogance. They forgot that while in the past Germany had been our friend, France had been a traditional enemy. Those in India, perhaps, felt that it might be a chance to get back to Europe—a nice change for those who had served for some years in India. I do not remember whether the Indian troops were demonstrative, or showed any particular interest. At this early stage I doubt if they had any clear idea of what the conflict was all about.

During the next two months the routine of training and social activities went on without any outward change. In early November the Divisional Rifle Meeting was in progress and it continued without interruption till it finished with Prize Giving on 11th November. Everything appeared to be "business as usual". But rumours flew fast and thick, like autumn leaves in a gale. We knew that formations were leaving India for overseas, but with Censorship, we did not know who they were or where they were going. Two parties of our most experienced Sergeants left for England to train "the New Army".

Our main source of news of the outside world was Reuter's telegrams, which were duplicated and issued to units. The German "Emden" turned up near Madras in the Bay of Bengal and caused some "alarm and dispondency", disrupting the sailing of troopships from Bombay and Karachi. There were rumours that Australian troops had landed in Bombay to replace those which had left, but they were only passing through to the West. On October 9th, the 1st Bn Royal Irish Fusiliers left for Karachi and France. They were the first British unit to leave Quetta, though several Indian ancillary units had already mobilised and gone. Shortly afterwards the 126th Baluchis and 2/7th Gurkha Rifles mobilised and left for unknown destinations.

It is not easy to recapture and describe the atmosphere at Quetta during the concluding months of 1914. There was expectancy and

hope, and despondency and frustration had not yet set in. News from Europe (such as we got) was disquieting, with heavy casualty lists. Social activities and recreations went on as usual, but no one had much heart in either. On October 17th our hopes were quenched by orders that no more British troops were to be moved from Quetta, Peshawar, or Rawalpindi, that is from Frontier defence. It was a bitter pill! Next day we were told that we would be one of the nine British battalions to be left on the North-west Frontier.

On our arrival in Quetta, General Sir David Campbell, V. C., had commanded the Quetta Division. He was succeeded by General Sir Malcolm Grover, who liked us, obtained his wines from our Mess and, later, sold us his Dining Room table, to seat 24. In 1915, he employed a Lance-Corporal from a Territorial unit as his Secretary. As Mess Secretary, I was always astonished to receive cheques from Sir Malcolm, signed, "Lance-Corporal" for "Lieutenant General"!

We had changes in Brigade command. Brigadier Sitwell left in October 1914. A British Service Officer, he was somewhat of a bully, was unpopular and commonly known as "Bloody Bill". He was replaced by Colonel Henniker, also of the British Service, but a very good soldier and popular with all ranks. He left in December, and thereafter we had Brigadier A. E. E. Campbell, of the Indian Army, a good trainer, a musketry and machine gun expert, with a very pleasant personality, and everyone liked him. He had a son in the 106th Hazara Pioneers, who did very well later.

Shortly after his arrival two significant events occurred. First, we were warned that a party of seventeen officers, recruited in India, would be sent to us for six weeks training, before posting to Indian Army units. I sat up all night preparing a training programme for them. When they arrived they were young men drawn from the Indian Civil Service, Tea Plantations, and Commercial firms in Calcutta and Bombay. They were excellent material, but all of them still continued to draw the pay of their civilian jobs, as well as Army pay, seldom less than Rs. 1200 a month. The regular Second-Lieutenants detailed to instruct them only received the basic rate of Rs. 202.11as. 3pies, per month! We came to the conclusion that we had missed our vocation!

Secondly, we had orders to send parties to Jubbulpore, Kamtee and Indore, vacated by troops, to garrison them until the arrival of Territorial Army units from Britain! I was sent with 100 men to Indore.

Troop Specials, in those days, were not the height of comfort. Old Third Class rolling stock was supplied, much of it badly in need of repair. We were routed—at 20 miles per hour—*via* Delhi, where I had a glimpse of the Viceroy (Hardinge) who had just arrived in his luxurious train. He looked a tired and worried man. We then went south, by Metre Gauge, through Ajmer and Rutlam, in rolling stock which was even worse than on the Broad Gauge.

At Indore, Mr. Bosanquet (Agent to the Governor General) and General Payne (Commanding at Mhow) were both extremely hospitable and helpful. We needed help, as the barracks had been left in a filthy state and much of the barrack furniture required replacement. While there, I saw a detachment of the Malwa and Mewa Bhil Corps, more of a Political than a Military unit, localised and used for internal Security purposes which was all it was capable of. The men were small and stocky and performed their guard duties smartly, but I doubt if the unit contained any Bhils, or Gonds, both aboriginal and primitive Central India tribes. No one seemed to know much about the Bhils. There is a story that a Bengali student, sitting for his First Arts examination, was asked, "What do you know about the Bhils?" After much thought he wrote: "The Bhil is a black-man but more hairy. He shoots at you with archers and buries your body in a hole. By this you may know the Bhil." Perhaps this was all there was to say about them.

On November 12th, a company of the 4th Battalion, The Dorset Regiment, Territorial Army, arrived unannounced at Indore. The unit had been a Cyclist Battalion, but had left their bikes at home. The men were excellent material, mostly agricultural workers, but they were rough and wanted shaking down. The officers were a queer lot and, having only served in annual training camps in England knew nothing about life in barracks. None was really capable of looking after his men. No N.C.O. had any army experience. Worst of all, none had any knowledge of India, or Indian conditions and we had no time to teach them. They were badly found as regards clothing and necessities—only one khaki jacket

and one pair of thick serge trousers (cut down to make shorts) per man, and antiquated leather equipment. I was very sorry for them.

Early on in the war, Lord Kitchener, as War Minister, began to raise his new "K" army. Why he did not expand the Territorial Organisation, which had been set up previously by Lord Haldane and which was expanded very successfully in World War II is difficult to understand. The existing 4th and 5th Battalions of the Territorial Army, which were only liable for Home Defence under their terms of enlistment were asked if they would volunteer for service outside the United Kingdom. Thinking that they would be sent to France, they all agreed. It was not until they were on the troopships that they found their destination was India! Consequently, on their arrival at Bombay, they were not in the best of tempers. A dirty trick had been played on them. We spent a week with them getting them settled in and showing them some of the ropes, but then we had to return to Quetta.

As a digression, it may be mentioned that, about November 16th, Earl Roberts died, while visiting our troops in France. "Bobs Bahadur" had spent 41 years in India, where he was greatly respected by all ranks as the Father of the modern Indian Army. He was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral, near the tombs of Lord Nelson and Lord Wolsely.

The winter of 1914-15 brought depressing news from France, with signs of a stalemate developing and sad casualty lists of old friends killed or missing. Officers and N.C.Os began to trickle away as demands grew from overseas. Others were called away to fill posts in depleted Staffs, or in various establishments in India. Imported goods began to vanish from the bazar, particularly such things as tinned foods, medicines and chocolate. Army Headquarters told us that we should be replaced in India in the Spring of 1915, which was cheering. The strong rumour was that the 4th (Quetta) Division, now reconstituted, would go overseas, perhaps to Mesopotamia. The source of the rumour was Indian Canteen Contractors, who were, generally, very reliable and got information before anyone else. But it came to nothing and the promises were broken, like so many other promises in the years to come.

With depleted Staffs and the uncertainty of orders from the War Office, a good deal of muddle was going on. As an example,



among many others, we were ordered to send a party of Officers and N.C.Os to Poona to train a Territorial battalion. On arrival they found that another similar detachment had been waiting there for 5 weeks, for the same task. The battalion never materialised. So our party was sent to Ahmednagar to look after a Prisoners of War camp!

A tale of the railway may close this chapter. The arrival of Territorials and others in Troop Specials threw a great deal of new work on Station staffs. Journeys were long and trains were slow, so each train carried "Iron rations" for the troops and, at intervals, halts were made at stations for the troops to make tea and the Officers to get a meal at the Refreshment Room. The Station staff made arrangements, in advance, for large quantities of boiling water to be ready to make the tea. Sometimes Indian Stationmasters got confused, as the following telegram, received by Control at Lahore, suggests:

"Number 44 up troop special arrives 1245 hours requiring 50 gallons boiling water for party of Middlesex STOP Male sex I know and female but what is this Middle sex STOP Please advise ENDS".

## IV

### *The Years of Denudation*

THE YEAR 1915 started badly. News from England chronicled the loss of capital ships and cruisers. Sub-marine warfare was beginning, with attacks on merchant vessels. Turkey had now entered the war on the side of Germany and the effect of her decision was beginning to be felt in India, with its large section of Muslim population.

From Bombay came news that in one of the Baluchistan Infantry battalions some Mahsuds (trans-border tribesmen from Waziristan) had run amok and murdered some British Officers on the quay as the unit was embarking for overseas. Mahsuds had an unenviable reputation for unreliability, fanaticism and ignorance, and this incident caused a shut-down on their enlistment. The outburst may have been due to religious feeling, or to fears of having to cross the "Kala Pani"—the sea.

There were strong rumours of unrest in Persia and Afghanistan and among the Western Frontier tribes. Formations at Peshawar and Rawalpindi were mobilised and a brigade had to be used to check incursions in Northern Waziristan. In India itself, there was some trouble with Indian units at Rawalpindi and Lahore, said to be incited by German Agents. There were also well-founded rumours of the defection of a few Muslims from the Indian Expeditionary Force which had landed in France.

These were minor and isolated incidents, though disturbing. Muslim soldiers were, understandably, under considerable strain. The Sultan of Turkey was also the Muslim Khalifa and his attitude to the conflict would, undoubtedly, affect co-religionists in the Army, who came from somewhat ignorant and bigoted peasant classes, just as the attitude of His Holiness The Pope, on secular subjects, might influence Roman Catholics in many lands. Moreover, in India, religious creeds and observances, and religious leaders, play a great part in people's lives.

But a much more serious incident was to occur. On February 15th, the 5th Light Infantry, a Muslim "class" battalion, stationed at Singapore, mutinied, rioted and surrounded a Club in which a number of British Officers and civilians were sitting. Seven British Officers and 12 European civilians were killed, 2 officers subsequently died of wounds, 12 Indian Officers, N.C.Os and men, who perhaps remained loyal, were killed and some 10 other persons seriously injured. The mutineers were driven out of Singapore into Johore State by Garrison Artillerymen, Singapore Volunteers and landing parties of Marines and Sailors from the Fleet. They were pursued by Johore State Forces and practically annihilated. Not unnaturally the news, released after some time, created a profound impression in India.

There were signs of deterioration in quality of the troops sent to replace those which had left India. Early in 1915, a Territorial battalion arrived in Quetta. The Quartermaster was a Dentist, the Adjutant was a Doctor and the Commanding Officer a Church of England Parson. It was said that he returned salutes by raising three fingers to his helmet—half military gesture and half benediction! In another similar battalion, the senior officers were all solicitors and the juniors, barristers. Professional etiquette did not permit conversation between the two halves and at Mess they sat at opposite ends of the table, with a large gap between them.

In the Quetta battalion the men were either middle-aged, or children. They knew little of soldiering and nothing of barrack-room life. India was a closed book. They were exploited by Indian menials, cooks and hawkers; they bought dubious soft drinks, raw fruit and sweetmeats in the bazar, which courted disease and took risks of disease with prostitutes. It was unfortunate that Indian troops looked on them as a joke, which was bad for prestige. Worst of all, the documents they brought with them were in hopeless disarray which was not their fault. The Indian rule was, quite unfairly, enforced: "No pay rolls, no pay. You should be in possession of the following articles. (Here followed four pages of items). If you cannot produce them or prove you never had them you must pay for replacements." It was weeks before the mess could be cleared up to satisfy the Accounting authorities and, in the meantime, no one got any pay!

It may be noted that Lord Chelmsford, later to be Viceroy, came out as a junior officer with one of these battalions. He was appalled at the muddle, dilatory correspondence and hardship to which the Territorial soldier was subjected. It is alleged that he enclosed his first month's pay in an envelope and sent it to Lord Hardinge with a covering letter which said that he felt ashamed to deprive an impoverished country of such a princely sum. The money enclosed was Rs. 5, all that remained after innumerable stoppages and deductions.

The Indian Army was also beginning to feel the drain of trained units. Chaman, the terminus of the Broad Gauge railway from Quetta, is an open cantonment on the edge of the plain which, thence, runs westward to Kandahar. A regular Indian battalion, stationed there, was mobilised and sent overseas. It was replaced by a unit which had spent all its life in some remote corner of India and seemed to have escaped Lord Kitchener's re-organisation. On its arrival, the Political Officer at Chaman, a Pathan, had one look at it and then took the first train to Quetta, where he handed in his resignation. He was thoroughly alarmed.

The repercussions of the Mesopotamian "adventure" now began to be apparent. The Persian Gulf area, which supplied most of the oil for the British Navy, was obviously strategically important. Mesopotamia was under Turkish control. When the strategic implications of the Persian Gulf area came under consideration, Turkey had not yet entered the war, the "Russian steam-roller" had not yet appeared as a myth and the way was not yet open for Kaiser Wilhelm's "pipe-dream" of the *Drang nach Osten*, by which he hoped to establish a vast Eastern Empire, to include India.

The first urge towards control of the Persian Gulf area came from the Indian Office, though talks with the War Office may have been at the bottom of it. The idea (a very natural one) was to occupy the oil producing areas, but certain problems arose. When to go there; how far to penetrate inland; where to get the necessary troops from; who was to control the operations; India or Whitehall? India was the obvious base for operations, but she had already sent troops to France, East Africa and had an un-estimated commitment in East Persia and, lastly, it was doubtful if she was

capable of conducting and supporting large scale operations outside her own territory.

It was, however, decided to make a "demonstration" at the head of the Persian Gulf. Thus in October 1914, before the entry of Turkey into the war, an Indian Brigade was despatched and landed there. One thing led to another and, before very long, two more Indian Brigades followed, with orders to "occupy Basra" on the Shatt-el-Arab. The main Turkish forces were known to be far inland, around Baghdad and Mosul and so, in December 1914, it was decided to push forward some 50 miles from Basra, to Kurna on the Tigris. Thus, early in 1915, the Basra bridgehead was extended to Ahwaz, to the north and Shaiba, to the south.

Through all this there had been much indecision and divided counsels, resulting in a good deal of muddle. But in April 1915, what had begun as a "demonstration" by one Brigade, was re-organised into the operations of an Army Corps of two Divisions. The real muddle now began while indecisions continued unabated.

Up to now the real pressure had come from Whitehall. By the time the Army Corps project was under way, India's reserves of troops and supplies of all kinds had, largely, been used up without replacement to meet other overseas demands. In Mesopotamia there was only medical equipment for one Division, and that was on a low scale. Port facilities at Basra were quite inadequate for a large force, and river transport for the Tigris was woefully short. In India, neither Bombay, nor Karachi, were organised as bases to supply large overseas forces and already could hardly cope with demands for troops further west. All these matters were obvious, but Simla is a long way from Whitehall and the latter had many other urgent theatres of war to consider.

It was now that the pinch began to be felt in India. Many narrow gauge railways, not on main communications, were pulled up and sent to Basra. Locos and rolling stock began to follow. East coast ports were denuded of cranes and other material, while railway workshops had to release machinery. Shallow draught river steamers as well as barges and tugs were taken from the eastern rivers.

By May 1915, Whitehall seems to have thought that enough had been done to secure the objective, i.e., the oil production area.

But now, as so often happens, political considerations began to make their appearance, raising extra-military requirements. Simla, having seen troops established in the Basra area, now had an eye on the Muslim situation. The Viceroy began to urge further penetration of the country, though it seems that the Commander-in-Chief was doubtful, India was now in control and the Commander-in-Chief's instructions to the Corps Commander in Basra, given with the authority of the Government of India, do not appear to have been fully appreciated in Whitehall.

In June, 1915, Townshend's "Regatta", moved up the Tigris and took Amara, while in July, Nasariya on the Euphrates was occupied. Thus the control of the whole Basra Vilayet was completed. The weather was now very hot, the troops very tired, the transportation system stretched to breaking point, medical supplies very low, port facilities un-improved and reserves in India almost exhausted.

Through all this India did not sit with folded hands. An intensive recruiting campaign began and, for some time, the flow of recruits was satisfactory, without recourse to some of the dubious methods used in later years. New units began to be formed, among them an Anglo-Indian battalion. There was a great shortage of officers, instructors, trained N.C.Os and specialists, such as signalers, machine-gunners, clerical staff, Military Police and sub-ordinate medical staff. The Staff College at Quetta had closed down, but it was not until 1916 that it was re-opened as an Officer Cadet School, a similar school being opened at Wellington. In the meantime the training of all these people fell on remaining units, who had, also, their own training to do.

Thus there was much improvisation. As an example of this, I was detailed to start a school to train machine-gun instructors for Indian units in Mesopotamia and for new units being raised in India. I was given two lock-up sheds and told to get on with it. I managed to borrow a Maxim Gun, with an antiquated mounting and on this started to train my own instructors. Out of 10 men sent to me I finally selected 2 from Indian State Cavalry, 2 from Punjab Regiments, a Hazara and a Gurkha. They were first-class material. While this was in progress, I borrowed another gun, obtained two .500 Fixed Defences guns from the Arsenal, as well as a number

of defective spare parts from which, with the aid of a "mistri" from the bazar, I constructed two more "guns" which could not fire, but could do everything else! With this "Heath Robinson" equipment I managed to turn out 50 men capable of instructing every 5 weeks.

I was amazed at the keenness and enthusiasm shown by my Indian trainees. Officially, they worked 9 hours a day. But, at their own request, I allowed them to work on another two hours each evening—till it was too dark to see. No British soldier would ever have done that! The men who came to me were from many classes—Punjabis, Sikhs, Mahrattas, Dogras, Gurkhas, Jats.

Towards the end of 1915, wounded and crippled men began to return to India from Mesopotamia. They had strange tales to tell and the effect of these on morale in India was unfortunate. At first the arrangements for their reception were inadequate. It was not until much later that Lady Willingdon's energy and ability did much to construct order and comfort out of chaos, even though she painted Bombay mauve in the process. Thousands owe her a lasting debt of gratitude. But rumours flew thick and fast. After the occupation of the Basra Vilayet, an advance to Baghdad, mooted by the Viceroy in 1914, was again strongly advocated. Whitehall, the Commander-in-Chief in India and the British Cabinet all had their doubts. But the optimists carried the day and so the ill-equipped force was drawn still further forward, away from the un-developed base at Basrah. In November 1915 the advance began, met with a repulse, had to retreat and was bottled up in Kut-el-Amara. Urgent appeals were sent to Whitehall for re-inforcements and the medical breakdown began in earnest.

These events in Mesopotamia coloured the whole of the war years in India, to the exclusion of nearly all else. Particularly on the North-west Frontier the strain upon Muslims became acute as news of the war alternated with the varying fortunes of Islam, as represented by Turkey. There were many agitators to take advantage of these hopes and fears and in late 1915 there was a serious incursion of Mohmands into the Peshawar District which led, in 1916, to the building of the Mohmand Blockade Line to keep them out. The Mohmand territory lay half in Afghanistan and half on the British side of the Durand Line. It was difficult

to control, for the "back door" could not be effectively closed. There was a strong rumour that Persia and Afghanistan had made common cause and this increased unrest along the whole of the frontier. A series of Mullahs—the most notorious being Mir Jan Badshah, the Haji of Turangzai and the Babra and Chaknaur Mullahs—operating from both sides of the Durand Line, proclaimed a Jihad, or Holy War.

But other factors began to emerge which had their effect on the economic life of the peasant in India. As military supplies began to be exhausted, Government replaced them (or some of them) from purchases in the open market, having no other source of replacement. Soap, toilet requisites, chocolate, spirits, beer, Birmingham goods, cutlery, crockery, all vanished. Bazaars had been full of cheap German goods, and when these were gone they could not be replaced. There was, then, no indigenous source of supply for these things, particularly Manchester goods, which the peasant wanted. This shortage began to cause murmurings which were seized on by agitators and German agents. Britain, which had a chance to capture Indian markets, was too involved herself.

To fill the vacuum came Japan, with cheap manufactured goods of all kinds. They were not only cheap but very shoddy. Matches, bearing the counterfeited trade marks of Bryant and May and Swedish firms were a danger to limbs and property. Cotton cloth lost its colour and shrunk in washing. Knives, mirrors, trinkets, beads, brushes, needles and the hundred and one small articles which peasant families like were of bad quality. Soon the bazaars resounded to the cry, "We don't want Japanese stuff". Both in India and Mesopotamia there was a flood of Asahi (Japanese) Beer, which was merely a chemical concoction. Japan had a great opportunity to capture the Indian market, but lost it by sharp practice.

With the reduction of indigenous supplies of cotton fabrics, which might have gone for clothes for the peasants but which were taken for tentage, uniforms and hospital requirements, together with the export of food grains to feed overseas forces, prices began to rise. In 1916 silver rupees, so useful for family hoards, began to disappear and were replaced by paper money which, at first, was looked on askance. The Khan of Kalat released some



400,000 silver rupees, which he had stored in wells. Horses, mules, ponies and camels were requisitioned for transport; cattle, sheep and goats were taken for food. There was a growing lack of confidence and increasing dissatisfaction.

To replace wastage and the supply of men for extra-regimental duties, both in India and overseas, drafts to build up British units began to arrive from overseas. They were no longer from established regimental depots in the United Kingdom, but the men came from wherever they were available. Scots went to West Country regiments, townsmen to country units, and Welshmen to north country units. It is not always realised that men from one area of Britain, do not necessarily fit in well with men from another. Thus, this was unsettling for everyone. Physique began to deteriorate and got steadily worse. In 1916, Garrison Battalions began to arrive from England. In these the men were middle-aged, but many of the officers—"dug-outs"—were definitely old. They were for static duties only, but were not a good advertisement for British power in India.

Among the drafts which came from the United Kingdom was the one which figured in the "Karachi Troop Train Disaster" and sparked off a public enquiry which, like the Mesopotamia Inquiry Commission, did no one much good. This draft, some 3000 men, arrived at Karachi in the middle of the hot weather. Presumably the ship was not sent to Bombay owing to the congestion and confusion at that port. The drafts were all destined for units in northern India or Baluchistan and had to travel by train along the edge of the burning Sind Desert when the weather was at its hottest. Had they disembarked at Bombay and travelled through Central India, no great trouble would have been experienced. But "there was a war on" and in those conditions calculated risks had to be taken. Even so, the major trouble which occurred could have been avoided.

For the long journey the usual third class rolling stock was provided. This had no fans, but ice was put on board and further supplies were available at various stations en route. Medical staff were also sent with each train, as well as rations and equipment for water, tea and so forth. In fact, the authorities at Karachi made all the usual arrangements for troop trains. Special con-

ducting parties had been sent from units to meet their drafts and look after them on the journey.

It was, perhaps, overlooked that these men knew nothing of Indian conditions in the hot weather, nor the special conditions of intense heat and dust to be met in the Sind Desert at that time of year. Windows were left open, which let in both heat and dust, ice melted rapidly and drinking water became lukewarm. Indiscipline broke out among men not prepared for such conditions, and they became uncontrollable. At wayside halts refreshment rooms were broken into and stocks of beer and spirits looted. Alcohol combined with the heat had its effect. Sun stroke, heat stroke and heat exhaustion made their appearance. The indiscipline at stations caused serious delays in running as the trains moved further north. There was a large number of deaths, a great outcry and Inquiry and a hunt for scapegoats.

As usual the local military authorities got the blame, though the guilt lay much higher up in India and in Whitehall. We, in Quetta, received 120 of the men from this draft. We had sent a very tough party to escort them; their journey was comparatively short and we had no casualties. Admittedly, it was most unfortunate that this particular route was chosen for this draft. But what was never brought out in the Inquiry was that a great proportion of these men came straight from prisons in Great Britain, where sentences of up to 3 years had been "suspended" on the understanding that they agreed to serve in India. The men we received were all Scots, with sentences for theft and house breaking. Their accounts were heavily in debt and we could give them little pay. Our own men disliked them, for there is no more detested person in a barrack room than a known thief. Most of them were criminal types and not amenable to discipline. They destroyed and sold their equipment and clothing, struck N.C.Os, absented themselves from barracks, refused to go on parade and so forth. As Adjutant, I had at least 3 District Courts Martial on my hands each week. Finally, we could stand it no more. The men were paraded and asked to sign a petition to be transferred to Scots regiments. This they did and after some time they left us to our great content. The War Office, when they sent these men to India, gave no indication of the criminal types which they were. Had they done so,

a great many lives might have been saved and India spared from lasting accusations of muddle and inefficiency.

It was in 1916 that the German Agent, Wassmuss, trading on unrest in Persia, began to supply large quantities of small arms and ammunition to tribesmen in Afghanistan and Mekran. This led to the establishment of the East Persian Cordon, running as far north as Meshed and using up men and supplies, which could ill be spared, on a long line of communications. The Amir Habibullah Khan of Afghanistan proved a wise and true friend throughout, but he could not allay rumours, nor control many of his fanatical tribal elements. All up and down the Western Frontier was a great "Tom Tiddler's Ground", where control from either side was difficult, when people passed to and fro freely, where all were armed and German agencies saw that their arms were added to.

In Baluchistan, Sir John Ramsay, Agent to the Governor General and his officers kept things quiet, but in 1917, unrest showed itself among the Marri Baluchis, who inhabit an area north-east of Sibi, at the eastern end of the Bolan Pass. This was surprising, for the Baluchi tribes who inhabit the stretch of country between Sind and Kalat State almost as far south as Karachi, are not war-like people in any sense. They were not recruited in the various Baluchistan Infantry battalions and, indeed, are averse to military discipline, their main occupations being herdsmen and camel drivers. They are poor and somewhat backward.

They started several minor raids that were not of great consequence, but finally attacked the Political Officer and his escort at the small post of Gumbaz. The attackers were not of much fighting value and, when they started to climb over the high wall of the post they were easily repelled, the Political Officer contributing to their discomfiture with a 12-bore shot gun. But something had to be done and a British battalion was sent from Quetta to pacify them. They foolishly offered opposition in force and got a severe lesson. Their capital, Kahan, was entered and a motor road to it constructed. They gave no further trouble.

It was towards the end of 1917 that we were moved from Quetta, to Peshawar.

## *The End of The War to End War*

THE ATMOSPHERE in Peshawar was very different to that in Baluchistan. In the latter the flexible and beneficent administration under the Sandeman Policy had, over a number of years, been successful in maintaining law and order, except for minor and localised disturbances and did not break down under the strain of war. The tribes in that area are not of the same fighting value as those which lie to the north of the Gomal river and the Afghan Government seems to have had no trouble in restraining its own tribes in the Kandahar and Ghazni areas.

A factor in this state of affairs may have been the maintenance of the traditional annual migration of the Afghan Pawindah tribes from Khorossan and Katawaz to the Indus valley and back again; a considerable asset to Afghanistan. The migrations may have been reduced in numbers, but they did not stop. Nor did the annual fruit trade between Kandahar and Quetta, which had a commercial value.

In Peshawar there was a sort of armed neutrality. At that time the Governor of the North-west Frontier Province not only administered the Districts east of the Administrative border, as far south as the Derajat, but also was Chief Commissioner in Political Control of the tribal areas between the Administrative Border and the Durand Line. These tribal areas, including the States of Chitral, Dir and Swat, stretched from the Pamir in the north *to the Gomal river in the south and were handled by the 5 Political Agencies of North and South Waziristan, Kurram, Khaibar and Malakand.* Each of these Agencies had a small "private force" of lightly-armed irregulars, under British Officers, who formed a sort of tribal police, capable of dealing with minor raids and misdemeanours of the tribesmen. These Irregular Corps were not under the control of the Army.

The tribes in this vast area of rough mountainous country—

leaving aside those in Chitral, Dir and Swat who had their own rulers and State organisations—such as Mohmands, Afridis, Wazirs and Mahsuds, were truculent, fanatical and ignorant, but well-armed and excellent fighting value in their own territories. They had their own tribal feuds but were closely connected with the Afghan tribes lying nearby across the Durand Line which, incidentally, was merely a chain of whitewashed boundary posts dotted at intervals on hill-tops. An exception was the Kurram Agency, where the Turi Khel cultivated a fertile and well-watered valley and were Shiah Muslims who could not afford to make common cause with the Sunnis who surrounded them. It is fair to say that, under the conditions existing in World War I, these tribal areas were a powder magazine, which needed only a spark to cause an explosion. There were many agencies, both in Kabul and India, anxious to provide that spark.

At this time Sir George Roos-Keppel was Governor of the North-west Frontier Province and Chief Commissioner. He was an able and masterful man, well known to the tribesmen with whom he had to deal. Although there had been disturbances up and down his part of the frontier, they had not been of any size or duration and, apart from the Mohmand incursion in 1915/16 and another in the Kohat area, they had been controlled without calling on the Frontier Brigades. In particular the Afridi tribes of the Khaibar Pass area and Tirah had remained quiet. Apart from such warnings and advice as the Political Officers might give, the secret of this success lay in the payment of tribal "allowances" which, in effect, were bribes to ensure good behaviour given with the knowledge that they would not be paid to trouble makers. There was considerable merit in this system of securing peace, for it was far cheaper to pay substantial allowances to keep the tribes quiet, than to risk a major conflagration when military resources were strained and when a consequent military operation would be far more expensive in money, lives and resources and, indeed, have unforeseeable consequences.

As has already been indicated, Turkey's action in this war placed a great strain on Muslims whether in Afghanistan, in tribal areas, in India, or the Indian Army. In 1916, in India, there came signs of a political awakening which threatened to complicate the

situation still further. Politics are no concern of the soldier, except to the extent where it may bear on military policy and organisation, or on the tasks which a soldier may be called upon to perform. Thus the meetings held by the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League in 1916 had their repercussions. The object of the activities of these two organisations is neither here nor there. The danger was that they were siezed on, exaggerated and distorted by subversive elements, backed by German money and gave a false impression to people both in and outside India.

The Nationalist, or Home Rule, Party was then led by B. G. Tilak and Annie Besant and, for the first time, began to overshadow the Moderate Nationalists led by Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. The Home Rulers received further stimulus in 1916 from the news that the Viceroy (Lord Chelmsford) was preparing schemes for post-war political reform. This seems to have led to the Congress-Muslim League Pact, a somewhat unstable alliance. At this time M. K. Gandhi was not prominent on the political stage, nor had he assumed the religious mantle of Mahatma. But he was well-known and respected as a sincere and able social reformer.

In these trends, well reported in the vernacular Press, the soldier—as a soldier—could take no part. But as an individual it was natural that interest should be taken. There is no doubt that these reports of political activities, whether distorted or not, had an impact on the Indian Army, as well as on Western Frontier tribes. In the East tales run fast. They cause a growing lack of confidence. The Indian soldier (or some of them) began to “look over his shoulder” and wonder what was happening. The tribesman wondered if the Indian Empire was tottering, a situation which would provide great opportunities for him. Had the Colossus feet of clay? In Kabul there is little doubt that some people began to think that a stout push would send it sprawling and this may have paved the way for Amanullah Khan’s mad adventure in 1919.

In 1917 Peshawar was an open cantonment. Apart from scattered unit Guard Rooms on the North Circular road, there was no barrier to entry anywhere. Armed tribesmen could come and go with impunity. On most nights battles used to rage up and down the Mall between raiding parties and armed police. By day

everything went on as usual. The Mohmand Blockade Line was still manned and this kept out major incursions from the north. But the extensive labyrinth of high-walled fruit gardens, to the south-west of the City and Cantonment, harboured Afridi gangs who had a covered line of approach in the nalas of the Kajuri Plain, lying between Peshawar and Tirah. Their activities were directed to theft and robbery with violence, mainly against the Cantonment bazar (still called the *Lal Kurti* or, Red Coat) and the railway Goods Yard. Householders employed chowkidars, which was merely paying an Insurance Policy to a member of a gang to secure some immunity against theft. The only building with electricity was the British Hospital which had its own somewhat unreliable plant. Elsewhere, in barracks and bungalows, oil lamps and hand-pulled punkahs were still in use. (I had a Jost Fan, run by a paraffin lamp, which smelt horrible.)

One of the major bugbears of the soldier in Peshawar in particular, but on the North-west Frontier as a whole, is the tribal rifle thief, for to lose a rifle or any part of it is a Court-martial offence. There was an elaborate system to safeguard rifles and ammunition, which were kept in barrack rooms by day and night for immediate use. Each man had a metal disc with his number and the number of the rifle on it, which he had to deposit on a board with similar numbers when he took out his rifle for duty. When his rifle was returned, he was given his disc. So he always had to be in possession of one or the other.

At night the rifles were kept in special locked racks in the barrack rooms, with a padlocked rod which prevented the bolts being withdrawn. Fifteen rounds of ball ammunition per rifle was similarly kept in padlocked steel boxes bolted to the floor and a guard slept round the racks with two sentries always on duty. Even so we had a man fatally stabbed by a thief who got into a barrack room one night. During the night it was customary to employ "prowlers" who, armed with pick-handles and shot guns, moved about round the buildings and were prepared to use their weapons on unauthorised persons. In camp, each man secured his rifle to his waist with a stout chain and placed the bolt in an inner pocket while he slept. The safety of rifles required ceaseless vigilance, and my battalion never lost one.

It may be remembered that, on Sundays, all British Church or Chapel parties carried rifle, bayonet and 15 rounds of ball ammunition per man. They sat with their rifles in Church, special slots being provided in all garrison churches to receive them. This order dated from the time of the Indian Mutiny in 1857. The side arms were useful, for, when the Chaplain preached for too long, the troops used to tap gently with the scabbards on the seats as a hint for him to stop.

In the summer of 1917 the first Lewis Guns began to arrive in India and the first training course for that weapon was held at Pachmarhi in July of that year. But they were not issued to units in India until after the armistice. Any received were used to equip units overseas. Small quantities of mechanical transport and fighting vehicles began to come in and were, mostly, allocated to Frontier formations. These were Rolls-Royce and Crossley Armoured Cars, Ford Van Companies, 15-cwt Lorry Companies and 3-ton (Leyland) Heavy Transport Companies. The latter had British drivers and personnel. There were a few Crossley Ambulances and Staff cars. At this time no roads were tarmaced; they were only macadamised and were very dusty, though some were surfaced with "kankar".

Some aircraft—not many—also made their appearance. These were mostly B.E. 2cs, known as "camels", carrying pilot and observer, a machine gun and a few 25lb bombs. Their performance was very low. Later one Handley-Page bomber arrived and was stationed at Risalpur, near Peshawar. It could carry 100 lb bombs and was used to bomb Kabul in 1919. But, again, its performance was very low and it had great difficulty in gaining the required ceiling to cross the Khaibar Hills. The state of the Royal Air force then was comparable to the efficiency of Nelson's wooden ships, to the battleships and cruisers of 1919. The pilots, however, flew their old "kites" with great courage.

Late in 1917 the School of Mountain Warfare came into existence at Abbottabad. The Commandant was Colonel Villiers-Stuart, a Gurkha Rifleman with great frontier experience. It was, really, a School for training in North-west Frontier tribal warfare, which required specialised methods and tactics. Villiers-Stuart demonstrated and taught these techniques, which, for the first



time, produced common thought and common tactical procedure and, later, had a profound effect on the conduct of the protracted operations in Waziristan in 1921/22.

British units still, from time to time, received small drafts from the United Kingdom. The quality of the men was not good; they were young, not strong physically and their morale was poor. Indian Army units were in the same boat, with recruits of poor physical standard. It was evident that the bottom of the manpower barrel was being scraped.

In the summer of 1918 a great fire broke out in Peshawar City. It is a walled city with 16 gates, some two miles in length, with a maximum breadth of about 1200 yards. There is only one street which will take vehicles, the Kissa Kahani, or Street of Whispers, which ran from the Kabul Gate to the Ghor Khatri, a fortified Police Station in the centre of the city. The "mohallas" were an unsavoury labyrinth of narrow lanes and gulleys, with open sewers in the centre, bordered by tall wood and mud built houses which lent towards each other at the top to exclude light and air. In such conditions the fire spread rapidly. Fire engines were few and antiquated and could not penetrate the narrow lanes. For those that could, there was very little water. Troops were sent in to cordon the blazing area and prevent looting. They had to contend not only with flames and looters, but also with intense heat, smoke and hordes of snakes and rats fleeing from the conflagration. At night the city was like a scene from Dante's *Inferno*. Attempts were made to pull down houses and blow up others with explosives to localise the fire, but they only succeeded in adding fuel to the flames. After three days it burnt itself out. Some seven or eight acres of property were destroyed and thousands lost their homes and their goods. The disruption caused was a factor in fomenting the disturbances which occurred later.

During 1918 came better news from Mesopotamia, where Henry Ford I, with his Ford Vans, was now rapidly winning the war; but vanished hopes and frustration had deadened the minds which received it. On the other hand the news of the German advance in northern France was bad. In many parts of India, including the North-west Frontier Province, shortage of foodstuffs and rising prices were causing discontent and hardship, if not actual hunger.

There were murmurings everywhere and the time was becoming ripe for an explosion. Thus, when the news of the Armistice came in November 1918, it reached the people as an anti-climax and something of a shock. Minds were too war-weary to take it in at once. Indeed, it is doubtful if the bulk of the people of India, or the Pathan tribesmen, realised for some time that the war was over. After all, the actual fighting was very far away.

Demobilisation began after many delays, due to a deluge of instructions, regulations and forms to be filled up. For the British, release depended on the man's occupation as stated on his enlistment papers. Sometimes this detail had been omitted; in others it was hotly disputed. Certain trades, such as coal-mining and steel-work were given priority of release over others. There was much discontent, as men taken on for the duration of the war wanted to get home before their jobs were absorbed by others. As an example of such difficulties, we had a man, enlisted long before 1914, who had worked as a carpenter and painter in our Pioneer's shop for nearly 18 years. His papers showed him to be a coal-miner, to which he protested vehemently. But he had to go with the first draft, in order, as his comrades said, "to go down the mine and paint the coal black".

On top of all this, early in 1919, came the great Influenza Epidemic. This was a pestilence allied to pneumonic plague, which had killed some 16 millions in North China and Manchuria in 1910/11. It struck northern India in its most virulent form. In the Punjab alone it was said that over 4 millions died. In Peshawar everything came to a standstill. The hospitals were full and doctors, nurses and hospital staff were decimated. Barrack-rooms, both British and Indian, became hospital wards and instructions were sent to units as to how to treat the stricken. Those still on their feet had to tend those who were prostrate. When they succumbed, those who were recovering had to get up and take over their duties. Indian cooks with British units were hard hit and all sorts of improvisations had to be made to provide meals. It was difficult to find men sufficiently fit to go on guard. The disease seemed to prove more fatal to the robust than to those of more wiry physique. Altogether my battalion lost 43 men.

Indian units were equally hard hit and Gurkha units, in parti-

cular, suffered more severely than others. The disease was rife in Peshawar District and food and fuel supplies failed to come in. In Peshawar City people were dying at the rate of 600 a day. Roads to the cemeteries were clogged with funeral parties. Graves could not be dug fast enough and bodies were buried in shallow troughs. Tribesmen came in by night, exhumed bodies from the shallow graves and stole the shrouds to sell in the City. Six of these "Resurrection Men" were caught red-handed and, after summary trial, were hanged publicly in the Shahi Bagh outside the City. This most unusual proceeding had a salutary effect. Fuel at the Hindu Burning Ghats ran short and there was no one to bring in any more.

The disease also spread to tribal areas and to Tirah. What the mortality was there no one will ever know. Perhaps it was not so severe as in British India for, when the Afghan War broke out in May, there was still a large number of tribesmen available—in fact far too many. The plague swept away as fast as it had come and in about five weeks had disappeared, leaving a trail of disaster behind it.

After fire and pestilence came war and it seemed as if the Horsemen of the Apocalypse were travelling over India. But to understand the causes of this final travail, it is necessary to look back at Afghan affairs.

Although Amir Habibullah Khan had been generally friendly to India, he had many internal difficulties to contend with and these often influenced his actions. He had allowed the Turco-German Mission, which arrived in Kabul in 1915, to remain. Led by the German von Hentig, its object was to conclude a favourable treaty with Afghanistan. Over this the Amir prevaricated and it is doubtful if he ever signed any such document. Finally von Hentig and other Germans left in disgust. The Amir, however, made no move to remove or control certain known Indian revolutionaries who had come to Kabul. Among them were such men as Barkatullah of Bhopal and Mohendra Pratap of Oudh. These, along with others, comprised the "Provisional Government of India".

The Turco-German Mission had strongly influenced some leaders in Kabul who were known as the "War Party". They included Nasrulla Khan (brother of the Amir), Amanullah Khan (third son

of the Amir), Ulya Hazrat (mother of Amanullah Khan) and Nadir Khan (Commander-in-Chief). These people clamoured for war on the side of Turkey. Finally Amir Habibullah drove their activities underground by calling an assembly of representatives of the people and explaining his neutralist policy, which they endorsed. This action, however, made the Amir a target for plots against his life. Some were frustrated but, on the night of February 19th/20th, he was murdered at a Shooting Camp in the Laghman Valley, near Jellalabad. Nasrulla Khan, Nadir Khan and Inayatullah Khan, were all at the camp when the murder took place. The troops at Jellalabad were incensed at the crime and arrested Nadir Khan on suspicion. At first there were attempts to proclaim Nasrulla Khan, or Inayatullah Khan as Amir. But Amanullah Khan was in Kabul where he was Governor and, on February 28th, he had himself proclaimed Amir. Nasrullah and Inayatullah found themselves without support and had to go to Kabul to pay allegiance to Amanullah.

All this caused a great stir in Afghanistan. Suspicions of patriicide fell on Amanullah and his position became somewhat precarious. Somehow public opinion had to be diverted into other channels. Nadir Khan was relieved of his post and sent to command the troops in Khost. A Colonel was found as a scape-goat and duly executed as the murderer. But this was not enough. Amanullah knew that the tribesmen on the British side of the Durand Line were ready for trouble; that Indian politicians were staging an agitation over the recent Criminal Law Amendment (Rowlatt) Act; that India was exhausted and war-weary; that as the result of demobilisation the forces in India would be greatly reduced. He thought that the time had come to strike and, through the revolutionaries in Kabul, he started overtures to revolutionaries in India.

The first fruits of these was the Punjab Rebellion in April 1919. The whole object of the instigators of the revolt was to take advantage of India's economic difficulties to disrupt communications and, thus, to absorb Field Army formations on Internal Security duties. Put into practice a most serious situation was created. Excited mobs, who probably did not know why they were rioting, burned and looted railway stations, tore up large portions of the

permanent way, destroyed rolling stock and property and attacked Europeans. Organised rioting took place as far south as Delhi and Ahmedabad. The authorities acted swiftly. Martial Law was proclaimed in the Punjab and military action taken to restore law and order. Rioters received heavy punishment and there were clashes with troops, particularly at Jalianwallah Bagh, near Amritsar, of which more later.

While there was turmoil in the Punjab, Afghan troops were quietly moved towards the frontier. On May 3rd, the Afghans staged their first definite acts of hostility in the Western Khaibar and, most unwillingly and inadequately prepared, India was forced to take counter measures. War was declared with Afghanistan on May 6th 1919 and General Mobilisation followed immediately. Thereafter, the operations of the Third Afghan War took place. That is a story in itself, of which I have written elsewhere.

Apart from India's material effort in World War I, her contribution in man-power is of interest for later comparison with that in World War II.

During the four years of war, 1,097,642 men were recruited from India and Burma, though the latter's contribution was only 18,673. 182 battalions of Indian Infantry and 131 squadrons of Indian Cavalry were sent overseas. When the Third Afghan War started in 1919, 124 battalions and 89 squadrons were still overseas.

Of the men enlisted, 683,149 were combatants and 414,493 non-combatants. The Kingdom of Nepal supplied 58,904 recruits. The drain on Provinces was not uniform all over India, as certain examples will show. The Punjab with a population  $20\frac{1}{2}$  millions, provided 446,976 recruits; the United Provinces with  $45\frac{1}{3}$  millions, provided 281,143; the Central Provinces with 14 millions provided 15,007 and Madras with  $42\frac{1}{3}$  millions provided 59,052.

Recruitment for the Indian Army, prior to 1914, was, roughly, 15,000 men per annum, to replace wastage. By 1917, the figure had risen to 121,000 and in 1918, 300,000 men were recruited. By this time the quality was very poor. Recruitment was, at first, outwardly voluntary but, as time went on, some large landowners used methods which savoured more of the "Press Gang", rather

than normal supply and demand, and could not fail to affect the minds of the peasantry from whom the men were drawn.

During the period of the Third Afghan War, between May and September, 1919, the number of men drawing rations in the theatre of war rose to over 750,000. No reliable figures are available for the number of animals which had to be fed, but it was very large and the wastage of beasts was considerable.

Thus, India came out of World War I with reduced resources, impoverished and exhausted and had still to make a great effort to repel Afghan aggression. On several counts her face had been blackened, largely as the result of circumstances over which she had little control. On the other had there were matters in which the authorities cannot escape blame for over-optimism. These "black marks" left an impression with people who did not know the India of ineptitude and inefficiency. They were ill-deserved, but were never quite eradicated. On one count, however, there was no dispute at all. The gallantry and self-sacrifice of her fighting men was never in question.

The conditions which existed in the years following the war were favourable to the awakening in the political sphere which had already started and which gathered momentum as the years went by. The British troops who went back to England on demobilisation were promised "a land fit for heroes to live in." They were quickly disillusioned. In India, those who had hopes of early progress towards self-government soon found that they had a long and hard road before them. World War I changed everything. Nothing was ever quite the same again.

BOOK II

*Vesper*

"A bell calling for an evening orison."

## VI

### *Cleaning up the Mess*

THE THIRD Afghan War lasted, officially, for 4 months and ended with the Treaty of Rawalpindi, signed on 8th August 1919. The 1st (Peshawar) Division was withdrawn from Dakka, in Afghanistan, and replaced in the Khaibar Pass by the 2nd (Rawalpindi) Division early in September, but the Afghans did not carry out their obligations in full until January 1920.

As in most wars, it is doubtful if either side got much lasting benefit from the contest. The Chief Afghan delegate who signed the Treaty, proclaimed in a speech at Jellalabad, as soon as he got back there, that Afghanistan had won the war. Perhaps it had, for the Afghan Government certainly received a large annual subsidy from the Government of India. On the other side India put a stop to Afghan aggression, but was left with a large bill to pay and a Western Frontier in a state of violent unrest, leading to the Waziristan Expeditions in 1921 and later.

Peshawar, on my return from Afghanistan, was much changed. It now had a barbed wire perimeter, large supply dumps everywhere and the roads had become dust heaps. We settled down to continue the demobilisation which had been interrupted by the war. Shortly afterwards I was astonished to receive orders to proceed at once to Simla to take charge of Section 8 (Discipline, British) in the Adjutant-General's Branch at Army Headquarters. This was, I think, the result of a long article on "Military Offences and the treatment of Offenders" which in 1917 I had sent to the Journal of the Royal United Service Institution of India. Some one must have read and remembered it!

After 7 years' service in Western Frontier stations, the "civilisation" of Simla was a most welcome change. Later, I was to make the rail journey up from Kalka many times. The passage through the long tunnel ending in Barog station where "Sharkey", the Refreshment Room manager, had a marvellous breakfast



awaiting the traveller, never failed to produce a feeling of relief after the dust and heat of the plains. Once more one could breathe cool, fresh air while, a few miles further on, the train, or rail-motor, turned a corner and a wonderful panorama of Simla came into view. The Olympian Height, the longed for goal for many aspirants to fame and promotion!

I soon settled down to my new job, my mentor being "Mr. McCarthy" who, as Head Clerk of the Section for many years, was an expert on procedure and precedent. Very stout, pompous and prosy, he lectured me severely and insisted that I should change my signature which, he said, was illegible. Remembering a previous Viceroy (was it Curzon?) who after reading a lengthy file wrote, "I agree with the gentleman who signs his name like trombone," I meekly complied.

I had imagined that I should have to deal with the misdemeanours of the British soldier—regarding which I knew a good deal—but was at once disillusioned. Neither in the British Army, nor the Indian Army is there any real "crime" in the Police Court sense. Serious offences indictable under Civil Penal Codes were rare. In the British Service and to some extent in the Indian Army nearly all offences arose from some psychological or pathological origin; though in the Indian Army religious considerations may sometimes be a determining factor. The British soldier no longer serves in India, but while he did, the conditions under which he lived in peace-time were, frequently, conducive to a mental state, known to French Colonial troops as "cafard". This may be described as lowering of morale, or becoming "brownd off". Such mental states can be aggravated by sickness and lead to misdemeanours of various kinds; in extreme cases to suicide.

The adverse conditions were many and varied. Gloomy ill-lit barrack rooms; bare and dusty parade grounds; heat, insects and boredom during the hot weather; malaria and sandfly fever; the lack of "nights in bed" when guard duties were heavy; ill-cooked meals and monotonous diets; nostalgia and separation from parents and friends of youth; the severance of all contact with women and girls of their own age, race and colour. It may be recalled that Mian Mir was once known as the "soldier's grave," due chiefly to the incidence of malaria. The name was changed to Lahore Canton-

ment. New barracks were built and the windows and doors "mosquito-proofed" with wire netting. As a result, malaria was scarcely reduced, but the gloom and airlessness of the barrack rooms led to an increase in the number of suicides. In later years the mosquitos were attacked in the places where they bred.

During the years between the two World Wars, these problems were tackled in a more scientific manner, but only so far as money could be made available. Barracks were improved, Coffee Shops, Reading and Recreation Rooms made more attractive, electric light and fans provided and other amenities increased. But the basic psychological conditions were largely insurmountable.

None of these matters came my way, except in serious cases of Courts-Martial which required confirmation by the Commander-in-Chief. I became involved in cases, which ran on for weeks, in a maze of red tape. It is an unfortunate fact that in War the moral fibres of normally upright people become threadbare. It may be a question of "let us eat and drink for tomorrow we may die". In peace-time all Government property had to be accounted for, meticulously, in quadruplicate—perhaps a good thing for the taxpayer. If anything, even when a pane of glass or a button, was broken or lost it had to be explained in triplicate as to how and why the casualty occurred, who was responsible and who, if anyone, should pay. As a sort of reaction from this inquisition, when war came, people were inclined to play ducks and drakes with Government property and equipment, on the grounds that all losses in war are due to enemy action, direct or indirect, that everything missing or damaged will be "written off" and a large bill will finally be presented to an absent taxpayer. There are others, too, who have a grudge against a parsimonious Government and do not realise that Governments exist only on money from the public and have none of their own.

Thus, I was faced with an ever growing spate of cases involving loss of stores and equipment due to negligence and, in some cases, fraud. These papers arrived after the person responsible for the loss had been determined. Many concerned matters which had taken place in theatres of war in which India had no responsibility and the papers, with a bill, were sent to the War Office. Similar action was taken when a British Service Officer, who had left

Corporal, was sentenced to death by shooting. The sentence was confirmed by the Commander-in-Chief. Mr. Winston Churchill was War Minister in Whitehall at the time and appealed to the Viceroy to commute the sentence, but the latter stood firm. It was obviously impossible to make an exception for a British soldier on so grave a charge. The effect of any such action would have had serious repercussions on the Indian Army, for the circumstances of the mutiny were well known.

Special arrangements had to be made to carry out the sentence. It was not then known that the Connaught Rangers would, ultimately, be disbanded and to take a Firing Squad from any other regiment would have started a feud with that unit which could never be eradicated. Finally volunteers were called for from a British Machine Gun battalion which was due to return to Britain for disbandment. Certain Roman Catholic priests came to Simla to plead for clemency, but their petitions had to be rejected. The sentence was duly carried out at the Military Prison at Dagshai and the body buried in the Prison cemetery. So ended a most lamentable incident which might never have occurred had officers been in closer touch with their men.

At this time my opposite number, in "Discipline, Indian Army," was the late Colonel A.G. (Tim) Shea, brother of General Sir John Shea, who became my life-long friend. He had a most cheery Irish temperament and was a confirmed practical joker. Since all the participants are now dead and gone, one of his most successful exploits can now be related.

There was once a popular pictorial paper called *Black and White*—now defunct. Towards the end of Lord Kitchener's time as Commander-in-Chief in India an issue appeared in which, on the full front page was a photograph captioned, "A new form of tent invented by Lord Kitchner for the use of the Army in India", or words to that effect. The picture showed a very small tent with a conical top and a flap to form a door, clearly recognisable as a "Tent, Officers, necessary." There was an officer, in drill trousers and shirt, obviously entering, or leaving, with his back to the photographer. There was also a small white terrier dog. When it reached India, the picture with its caption caused great hilarity. Lord Kitchener saw it and was furious.

At once a "witch hunt" was started to discover the culprit. The Officer in the picture was identified—possibly as owner of the terrier—and the location, as a training camp near Bannu in the Derajat. Everyone who had been at the camp was suspect. The unfortunate officer who was the unwitting object of the photographer was hauled up before Lord Kitchener, but was able to plead complete innocence. There were threats of combined penalties if the person responsible did not "own up"—rather on the lines of a boys' school when the Headmaster threatens to keep everyone in unless the perpetrator of some crime comes forward. The Editor of *Black and White* was approached but refused to disclose the name of the person who sent the picture. Finally the matter died down.

Whether Tim Shea took the photograph, or actually sent it to the paper is doubtful. But he certainly was at the bottom of the whole affair and was never caught. Ever since that this particular tent was known as "The Kitchener Tent"—a lasting, but unappreciated, memorial to a great Commander-in-Chief.

## VII

### *Recrudescence*

DURING WORLD WAR I social activities in Simla and other large cities of India were greatly curtailed and there was little of the "business as usual" attitude which appeared in some quarters in World War II. But social life did not vanish altogether, for when people are working hard over long periods they require some form of relaxation and recreation if they are not to become stale. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy".

After the Armistice there was a general relaxation of tension. Many people had gratuities to burn and started on this pleasurable occupation. Others began to revive sports and games which had been in abeyance during the war. All this "renascence" was not so apparent in the autumn of 1919 and the spring of 1920, until the yearly exodus of the Government of India to Delhi for the winter months began.

This annual autumn move and the move back to Simla in April was a remarkable exercise in transportation which, over many years, had become a sort of "drill." The move of the various Departments was staggered over some 10 days. In October tons of files had to be packed in crates, carried by Kashmiri coolies to the Simla Goods Station and loaded into narrow-gauge wagons. At Kalka everything was transhipped to broad-gauge wagons for the journey to Delhi. At Delhi the baggage had to be unloaded and taken by bullock cart some miles to the Secretariats beyond Old Delhi and unpacked. Several Indian Clerks enriched themselves by collecting private baggage in Simla and delivering it in Delhi. There were special trains for the personnel. Each Department was, virtually, out of action for about a fortnight and all this took place twice a year. Later, when New Delhi came into being, with all the new bungalows, wives had to move house every six months. It seemed a tremendous waste of time and effort but may have been an improvement on the days when Viceroys drove all the way

from Calcutta to Simla in horsed carriages, along the very dusty Grand Trunk Road. In World War II, this upheaval came to an end and Departments remained permanently in New Delhi. It was very hot!

Although in those days the Headquarters of the Government was in Simla with permanent buildings, a Viceregal Lodge and a Secretariat had been built at Old Delhi, north of the city and between the Jumna river and the famous "Ridge". These buildings, though only constructed of mud-brick and plaster, were attractive to look at and served as a "Camp Office." Single storeyed, with domes at the four corners, wide pillared verandahs covered with acres of whitewash, set among green lawns, it was a little unfair to call them "whited sepulchres." They were very pleasant to work in until the winter rains, which could be heavy for a short period, arrived. Then they became exceedingly damp and chilly; the flat roofs leaked and the whitewash ran off the walls in yellow streaks. I found my office was in one of the domes, approached by a steep and narrow winding stair. When it rained I had to sit with an open umbrella over my head and another over my table and wrap my feet in a mackintosh to keep them warm.

Government officials had certain accommodation provided for them, mostly of the same construction as the Secretariat. Seniors went to Metcalfe House on the bank of the Jumna river; less senior to Curzon House; Juniors to Alipur House. All of these had accommodation for families and a restaurant. Those who could not get into any of these had to make their own arrangements in Maiden's or the Cecil Hotels, in tents, private houses, chummeries, camps on Kingsway or at the Delhi Club.

When writing of hotels it may serve here to mention the "Hotz Family," well known and respected by many of those who worked in Delhi in those days, as well as many tourists who used to visit India in the cold weather. This family owned and ran the Cecil Hotels at Delhi and Agra and Wildflower Hall outside Simla. Old "Mother Hotz" and a daughter managed the hotel at Delhi, with two other members of the family at Agra. A son, Bobby Hotz, owned a flourishing electrical business in Simla. He was, later, killed in a motor accident. There were, of course, other hoteliers and restaurateurs with a claim to fame—Faletti of Simla and

Lahore, Peliti of Simla, Firpo of Calcutta as well as Wenger and Kellner.

At this time the main shopping centre with European shops in Delhi was just inside the Kashmir Gate of the city where, also, Imre Schwaiger, the art expert, had his emporium of eastern art, carpets and rugs, a great attraction to tourists. Near what was called "The Khaibar Pass" at the head of Kingsway, north of the Secretariat, were a number of Indian shops for the clerical personnel who were accommodated in that area. Anyone who wanted Indian silks and brocades and articles of Indian handicrafts went to the Chandni Chowk in the city. There was only one cinema, located in the city near the Railway Station. Here silent films were shown, music being provided by an old man at a piano and his daughter with a violin. Popular features were the long serial films in which, over several weeks and some 30 "parts", a hero used nightly to undergo hair-breadth escapes from death and finally got married in the same shirt as he was wearing in "Part I." The better seats were in a long gallery, but the floor of the cinema was always crowded with an Indian audience. I was intrigued to note that the majority stretched out on wooden benches and slept soundly during the whole showing of the films. They did, however, rouse up to enjoy a Mack Sennett comedy when one was showing.

In 1911 King George V, in circumstances of great pomp and magnificence, laid the Foundation Stone of the 8th City of Delhi on a site well to the north of the 7th City. In order to prepare for this and for subsequent building a light railway had been laid along the famous "Ridge", terminating in the "Durbar Station" on Kingsway. During World War I, this railway, with others, had been taken up and sent to Mesopotamia. The graded track still remained and had been laid with tan to make a riding track. The Station buildings had been converted into the Kingsway Gymkhana Club, though they were most inconvenient for such a purpose. Sometime after the Regal ceremony of laying the Foundation Stone, it was decided that the site for the new City was unsuitable, would be malarious and would not provide enough water. Thus the Stone became a "Folly", lying in deserted, isolated majesty in a rather scruffy field, with a belt of trees on three sides. The labour

of our hard-working Royal Family had been in vain. The Stone which the planners rejected had no hope of becoming the foundation of anything. I last rode out to see it one evening in 1942. A pathetic memorial to an unfortunate and expensive miscalculation.

The new site for the New City was at Raisina, south-west of Delhi City and some 15 miles from the Foundation Stone. In 1920 work was proceeding on it. As a preliminary a road system was constructed, in which there were many roundabouts from which roads radiated. There were, however, no signposts and few land marks. In the evenings a thick mist rose over the area. Thus a traveller, going out to dine at one of the few scattered houses which had been built, got into a roundabout and could neither locate the road by which he should leave it, nor the road by which he had entered.

It was about this time that M. Clemenceau—"Le Tigre"—paid a visit to India and on reaching Delhi was taken up onto the walls of the old Fort of Purana Kila, which at the end of a long vista was to face Viceroy's House. Edwin Lutyens and Samuel Baker were already at work on the foundations of Viceroy's House, the Secretariat buildings and Parliament House and the jibs of their many cranes stood out bravely against the evening sky. It is alleged that after a long and silent survey of the new site, M. Clemenceau remarked, "It will not make a very good ruin"!

During the winter of 1919-20 social activities began to revive in spite of the gloomy political outlook. The Delhi Hunt was resuscitated, thanks mainly to the help of Lord Chelmsford. Polo began again on the magnificent Durbar Grounds on Kingsway. There was the usual round of Viceregal functions and dances, but those who went into the country to shoot ducks, snipe and partridges could not help noticing that they met with black looks from some of the villagers. Things were certainly changing.

With the coming of the hot weather, Government again packed up and returned to Simla. The Simla "Ridge" is some 7500 feet above sea level, while above it Jakko Hill rises to 8500 feet. The air unlike that of the plains is rarefied and it takes a week or so to get acclimatised to it. The height is not particularly good for elderly people, who are liable to develop blood pressure. Nor was the summer capital very healthy before the rains came to cleanse



it. It was very overcrowded, the bazar below the Ridge was congested, difficult to keep clean and produced legions of flies. The main roads were dusty, and "oiling" them to lay the dust made things worse. Many Kashmiri coolies and *paharis* came in to find work during the summer and these, with the rickshaw coolies, lived in insanitary conditions which were a disgrace. Houses and bungalows were set fairly close together on the steep hill-sides and most of them discharged their sewage and sullage in open channels. The place swarmed with monkeys who, if they found unguarded windows, could do a great deal of damage. There was a good deal of minor sickness, such as sore throats and "Simla tummy." It was extraordinary that there was not more.

Members of Council had their official Houses, such as Peterhof, Snowdon and Knockdrin. Other senior officials had large houses which they passed on to successors. The Viceroy was at Viceregal Lodge and the Governor of the Punjab at Barnes Court. The smaller fry had to make their own arrangements. There were one or two Government hostels, such as Craig Dhu on the Elysium spur; rooms were available in the hostels; the United Service Club catered for bachelors; many married people rented private houses.

There was a great deal of social activity. Much tennis was played in the evenings. A tan riding track ran round Jakko Hill and here, on several occasions, in the early morning, I met Lord Chelmsford riding with a groom. He was a very charming English country gentleman and when riding forgot all his cares of office and talked on many subjects. The United Service Club owned Bendochy, a small house at Mashobra and many people would ride out there for lunch and tea on Sundays. Later they bought Carignano, from M. Peleti the hotelier, which was further out, and beyond it, at Mahasu, was a small golf course, where a sliced ball might go 1000 feet down the hillside. Some people rode out further to Wildflower Hall on the Tibet road, which had once belonged to Lord Kitchener. Far down below the Kaitu spur, in an amphitheatre of hills, was Annandale, with the Annandale Gymkhana Club, the polo ground and the race course. This was the scene of many mounted gymkhanas and race meetings at which Indian crowds turned up in force to bet with local "bookies" or on the Totalisator.

At that time no cars were allowed in Simla and it was some years before either the Viceroy or the Governor of the Punjab were allowed to use cars. They used to drive to Church on the Ridge, on Sundays, in small traps. Otherwise, people walked, or rode or went in rickshaws. Many people kept their own rickshaws and teams of four liveried *jhampanis*. The United Service Club had its own fleet of rickshaws and in addition there were many bazar rickshaws. The Sisters of the Convent, beyond Snowdon on the road to Sanjauli, had a "double" rickshaw, in which two of them sat propelled by six men. The conditions under which *jhampanis* worked and lived, particularly during the monsoon, were very bad. During World War II, Lady Isobel Hutton, herself a doctor, took the matter in hand and with a band of helpers did much to alleviate their lot.

The Simla Amateur Dramatic Club, always a popular feature of the Simla season, was revived and played at the Gaiety Theatre. This was owned by the Municipality and was originally below the Assembly Rooms which had been damaged by earthquake and demolished. It was also used by the Indian Dramatic Players as well as by an occasional Touring Company, such as the Howett Philips Company and a company which came from England, about this time, headed by Mr. Leon Quartermaine. The Municipality was loath to spend money on the Theatre and the auditorium was not in very good shape. There was a small Green Room which was patronised by players and their friends but the Dressing Rooms were ill equipped, dirty and very inconvenient. Mr. de la Rue Browne was a remarkable character who made and painted most of the scenery in a small shed alongside the theatre. His real name was Browne, but the "de la Rue" had been added since on any morning he could be seen standing outside the theatre in his shirt-sleeves, smoking a peculiarly pungent cigar and passing the time of day with all and sundry. He was extremely dictatorial, had strong views of his own and was sometimes difficult to deal with unless he knew you. He was the bane of producers, for the "sets" were never ready until a few hours before the dress rehearsals, Mr. Browne's dictum being that "it will be all right on the night".

The A.D.S. put on both straight plays and musicals and on oc-

casion some energetic person would put on a play for Charity, without the backing of the A.D.S. There was generally no lack of talent for straight plays but for the musicals it was difficult to find people who could sing and act at the same time. Choruses were often dumb. There were, however, many real successes with Gilbert and Sullivan operettas—*Yeomen of the Guard*, *Gondoliers*, *Mikado*, *Pirates of Penzance* and *Trial by Jury*, which were well dressed and produced. Generally a play ran for six evening performances and a matinee and the A.D.C. with luck, "broke even." Some productions were good, others were not. But the audience knew most of the cast and were extremely charitable. The press was not quite so enthusiastic at times.

Freemasonry was very strong in Simla and in addition to several Craft Lodges, most other degrees, were catered for. Each year there was a Freemasons Ball at which the principal guests were the Viceroy and Vicereine. There was also a Freemason's Service at Christchurch which the various Lodges attended in procession in full regalia. Lord Kitchener was a very eminent Freemason and when he was Commander-in-Chief he founded the Kitchener Lodge at Simla. It was said—quite untruthfully—that in his time no officer could get a job at Army Headquarters unless he was a Mason, though no doubt this helped when a selection was being made.

For many years there was one Simla "Institution", now defunct, which played a great part in the social activities of the season. This was an organisation called "The Most Hospitable Order of Knights of the Black Heart", founded in Simla in 1891 by Major Newnham-Davies of The Buffs who, later, for many years contributed articles to the old "Pink 'un" under the nom-de-plume of "The Dwarf of Blood". The Order was in abeyance during World War I, but was revived in 1920.

There were misconceptions as to the nature of this Order. Some thought it was a kind of Secret Society as the Knights conducted their business in strict privacy behind locked doors. Others again were of the same view as the London Press who, after the only Reunion of the Order in England (held at Grovesnor House, London, in 1935) came out with the banner head-line "Women Haters meet in Secret". Neither of these ideas had any substance in fact. The original idea in 1891 was "to brighten up the Simla

Season which was extremely dull." Records, which were carefully kept since that date, show that it succeeded in this object. But the subsequent and only object of the Order during an existence of some 55 years was to enable the bachelor Knights to repay hospitality to their many friends, both male and female, in a suitable and fitting manner. For this purpose they banded together to hold three "Revels" and a Children's Party each year to which all those who had entertained them were invited.

These Revels, or evening entertainments, were always held in the Canadian Covered Tennis Court at the United Service Club and the Order maintained a number of decorations and "trappings" by which the bare court and the basement below it were converted into Ball-room and Supper-room. At all the functions as well as at their private meetings the Knights wore evening dress, knee breeches and silk stockings, pump shoes with a paste buckle, a narrow red band below the right knee, special waistcoat buttons, a small enamelled locket in the shape of a Black Heart on a red ribbon as a collar badge and a knee-length scarlet silk cloak with black velvet collar and a large Black Heart over the left breast. The Grand Master wore a large gilt Heart suspended from a gilt collar chain of office.

Membership of the Order was very exclusive and there were never more than 24 Knights in any Season. No one could apply to join and the Knights decided on who should be "approached" in secret conclave. A main qualification for membership was that no Knight "should be living in open matrimony." If a Knight got married, or was joined by his wife in Simla, he ceased to enjoy full membership while such a matrimonial indiscretion lasted. His scarlet cloak was replaced by a white one without a Heart, his red knee band replaced by a white one and he no longer wore his collar badge for "he had lost his Heart". He took no part in the deliberations of the Order but he and his wife attended every revel, as guests.

The Order was ultra-democratic in its principles. When any matter had to be decided "the will of the minority prevailed in the interests of harmony". Thus any Knight could veto any proposal or strike out the name of a guest to be invited to a revel and his view was never questioned. This is a principle which has to be

practised before its undoubted merits can be appreciated.

Two mysteries always intrigued ladies, and also many male guests. The motto of the Order was "He is not so . . . as he is Black". What was the missing word? Even now, when the Order is no more, I will not divulge that well kept secret. The second was the small black enamel heart-shaped locket of the Collar badge. What dire secret did it contain? Did it hold the photograph of the Knight's sweet-heart? This again was never disclosed. In fact I do not suppose that most Knights had ever opened their lockets and I should think that 100 per cent of them were empty! But both these matters were talking points!

The Order elected several officers each year, such as the Grand Master, The Prelate, The Keeper of the Cheque, the Comptroller of the Trappings and the Herald but had only one Hon. Lady Assistant. For many years she was Mrs. Bessie Wilson who was given the title of "The Green Heart". Her sole duty was to supervise the *dirzi* (Lahori Mal) in tasks of replacement and repairs which were beyond the capabilities of bachelor Knights. When she died six Knights carried her coffin to the grave in the cemetery at Sanjoui.

The Order was an extremely influential body and numbered among its members: two Viceroys (the Marquess of Zetland in 1900 and Lord Willingdon in 1933); one Commander-in-Chief (Field Marshal Sir Philip Chetwode in 1929); two Governors of the Punjab (Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency in 1912 and Sir Henry Craik in 1922); as well as the Earl of Lucan in 1900 and Lord Gort in 1933. Besides these there were many distinguished members of the Indian Civil Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force who held high office from time to time. The most distinguished of all was H. R. H. Edward, Prince of Wales.

In the autumn of 1921, H.R.H. came to India to carry out certain official functions. His arrival at Bombay was not auspicious, for on that day a riot took place there in which 53 persons were killed and 403 injured. His stay in Delhi was marked by a *hartal* and boycott of all the functions at which he was present. As the processional routes were likely to be deserted a number of villagers was brought in from the Punjab and other Districts to act as *shabash-wallahs* and provide "crowds". They were placed in camps

near Delhi and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Unfortunately there were not enough of them to line the whole length of the processional routes so, being organised in parties of about 100 men, when the procession had passed the first party, it was "embussed" and hurriedly moved to a position further along the route. Thus the procession passed each party more than once. In one party there was a very tall man with hair and beard dyed vivid scarlet and a strong voice with which he led the cheers. It was impossible to escape noticing and hearing him. After two processions the Prince was heard to remark, "I seem to have seen that man before!"

With the exception of the Indian Princes it cannot be said that H.R.H.'s tour of India was popular with any section of the community. It may have been that he was tired and bored with the many official and social functions and did not conceal his feelings. It was felt that something must be done to mitigate any feelings of disappointment he may have harboured. Accordingly the Order of the Black Heart proposed that they should entertain him to a Young People's Party from which all formality or officialdom should be absent.

Negotiations were opened with his Chief Secretary, Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency (himself a Knight of the Order) and H.R.H. graciously agreed to become a Black Heart for one day only. There were difficulties over this for his Royal Father objected to him joining organisations outside the United Kingdom. However these were resolved and a cutter from Messrs Ranken was sent down to Central India to measure H.R.H. for his Dress.

The Order waived its rule against staging Revels outside Simla and the Kingsway Gymkhana Club at Delhi was "borrowed" for a week. It was most inconvenient but Viceregal Lodge helped out with tents and carpets, uncounted yards of cloth were bought in the bazar and a whole army of *dirzis* enlisted to measure and sew the decorations. None of the "trappings" from Simla would fit. A special caterer (Mr. Wyseman of the Bristol Hotel) was imported with his cooks from Karachi and many delicacies from all over India, including pheasants packed in snow from Nepal, obtained. The Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, with their ladies were invited but kindly agreed not to attend!

The Revel took place on the evening of February 16th, 1922 and H.R.H. attended wearing the Dress of the Order. He and his Staff dined with the Knights and this was followed by a Ball and Supper. India had been scoured to obtain the most attractive young ladies to dance with the Prince, and there was no dearth of those only too anxious to make the longest journeys to accept invitations. Altogether there were 160 guests and, in accordance with the best traditions of the Order the party did not break up until about 4.0 a.m. I am quite sure the Prince enjoyed the evening; at any rate he commanded his Chief Secretary to write and say that he did. Perhaps the informality was a relief from all the formality to which he had been subjected.

This catalogue of trivialities may end with the record of "The Unanswered Petition". All over the world Venereal Disease causes disability and in the East it can take most virulent forms. It is preventible, but the British "non-conformist conscience" makes it difficult to employ measures to protect British personnel, and anyone trying to do so renders himself liable to have his military career cut short, though certain prophylactic precautions are tolerated. In most Eastern cities are quarters where the most ancient profession in the world is located. Sometimes it becomes necessary to forbid such quarters to British personnel, though such a measure is unsatisfactory since courtesans will move elsewhere and ply their trade where control is impossible. On one such occasion, in a city of the United Provinces, a quarter was placed "Out of Bounds" by the military commander.

The ladies of the quarter were much incensed by this order and prepared a Petition to the Commander-in-Chief, at that time General Sir Charles Munro. They urged that the order be rescinded and stated very clearly (in four letter words) why this should be done. They evidently employed a bazar letter-writer, with a limited knowledge of official epistolary jargon, to prepare their letter. This was in manuscript and ended with the words:

"We have the honour to remain,  
Your Excellency's  
Most Obedient Prostitutes."

The Petition was sent down to Sir Charles with the note, "His Excellency should see". It came back with the remark in red pencil, "Thank you. Please don't show this to my Mary".



## VIII

### *The Rising Tide of Politics*

THE CLOSING years of World War I had been disturbed. General unrest had been fostered by frustrations, uncertainties, the drain on man-power, rising prices of commodities, deficient monsoons and the activities of revolutionaries and German agents. Hopes of constitutional progress based on Lord Chelmsford's pronouncement in August 1917 had been severely damped. Indian politicians feared that with the end of the War, promises made would be relegated to the far distant future. The Muslim population was apprehensive at the apparent attitude of the Allied Powers to Turkey and feared that final Peace terms would endanger their Holy Places and their Faith. The "Rowlatt Acts", embodying legislation to replace emergency War regulations for criminal acts, aroused strong opposition from all sides.

It was in connection with this opposition that Mr. Gandhi emerged as a political leader and began an organised agitation to which the masses, already discontented, gave ear. In the face of a supposed common danger Hindu, Sikh and Muslim parties, of many shades of opinion, combined in opposition to the Government. The first of the Passive Resistance campaigns, with a pledge by Mr. Gandhi that violence and damage to property should be avoided, was launched. It was unfortunate that local misrepresentations aroused feelings of excitement and resentment which culminated in the Punjab disturbances of March 1919.

In this outburst of violence many people lost their lives and great damage was done to public and private property. Martial Law was declared in Lahore and elsewhere in the Punjab. Although it may have been necessary to restore law and order, some of the regulations promulgated were questionable and resulted in lasting bitterness. The final tragedy took place at Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar on the evening of April 13, 1919, when 379 persons were killed and 1208 seriously injured.

As a result of these disturbances and a public outcry a Committee of Enquiry under the Chairmanship of Lord Hunter, a Scottish Law Lord, comprising both British and Indian members was set up to enquire into many matters concerning them. One of these was the action taken by General Dyer at Jallianwala Bagh. The evidence given before the Committee on all the issues and its Report and conclusions formed the subject of controversy over many years. But the case of General Dyer occasioned particular interest and it is possible that some of the underlying facts never really appeared.

There is no doubt about the basic facts. During the emergency all assemblies of more than a few persons had been banned by proclamation in Lahore, Amritsar and elsewhere. This was for the maintenance of law and order and the regulation was well known to everyone. In defiance of the ban a large meeting of people was arranged for the evening in Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar. General Dyer, Commanding at Amritsar, had news of the assembly and went with troops to disperse it. The troops were a small detachment of Gurkha Rifles and a few Sikhs. The Bagh, or Garden, was a long, rather empty enclosure, rectangular and enclosed by a high wall. On one short face was a large gate, which was the main entrance and at the other end a small wicket gate.

The troops entered by the large gate and formed up with their backs to it thus, in fact, blocking the exit. The garden was full of people listening to harangues. It seems probable that no one knew that the exit at the far end of the enclosure was a narrow gate and it may be that when the first shots were fired, people tried to escape by that exit which became jammed in the press. At any rate they surged back towards the main entrance in front of which was the line of troops. There is little doubt that General Dyer thought that he was being attacked and that his small force might be overwhelmed. It is not known what actual order he gave, but the firing continued. The detachment contained many young soldiers, hardly more than recruits, but there was no evidence that they got out of control. The firing resulted in the regrettable casualties given above.

Before he actually appeared before the Hunter Committee General Dyer, accompanied by Mr. Isemonger of the Punjab

Police, came to Army Headquarters at Simla. Reports of the incident had already been studied. General Sir Havelock Hudson was then Adjutant General and his Deputy was Major General H. F. Cooke. These, with other officers of the Adjutant General's Department concerned with Discipline had at least two conferences with General Dyer. It was clear from the reports and Dyer's own statements that he had an unassailable case. He was not in any way tutored, but was advised to confine his evidence strictly to the events at Jallianwala Bagh.

General Dyer was a very capable commander as his relief of Thal during the Afghan War of 1919 testifies. His early life was spent in India and he had been educated at Bishop Cotton's School at Simla. Often boys who had that type of upbringing were more intolerant of Indian criticism than those whose early life was spent elsewhere and who came to India as grown men to serve. Thus he may have harboured feelings of resentment when called to justify himself before a Committee containing Indian members. At any rate when he was questioned by some of the Indian members he lost his temper, cast aside the advice which had been given him and made all sorts of statements about matters which were no concern of his.

It is clear from the published evidence that some Indian members did all they could to make him gainsay his words, but he seemed determined to destroy himself. The Committee had no real quarrel with Dyer who was a small fry. They were far more concerned to pin blame on Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Governor of the Punjab, who was an extremely astute and able man. There is no doubt that Lord Hunter, who was by no means loquacious, was deeply disturbed by Dyer's outburst. In the outcome the Secretary of State for India, to whom the Committee reported, had no option but to punish Dyer.

Later Sir Michael O'Dwyer sued Sir Sankaran Nair for libel in 1924. The case aroused great interest. In his summing up Mr. Justice McCardie is alleged to have said, "... I express my view that General Dyer ... acted rightly and in my opinion, upon the evidence, he was wrongly punished by the Secretary of State for India." With all respect it would seem that the learned Judge's dictum was both right and wrong. Dyer was not punished for

his action at Jallianwala Bagh and, on the evidence, one cannot but agree with Mr. Justice McCardie's summing up on this point. But after what he *said* before the Committee he could not escape condemnation. He was his own executioner.

The case, however, raises the issue of whether soldiers whose action or conduct may be called in question should be called on to give evidence before quasi-judicial enquiries. Few soldiers, except in Legal Departments, have any training in legal matters or knowledge of legal procedures. They have some knowledge of Military Law and the formalities of Courts-Martial which are sufficient for the minor cases dealt with by District Courts-Martial. At General Courts-Martial, they always have the guidance of a trained Judge Advocate. But few have any knowledge of Civil Courts or of giving evidence before them. At a Public Enquiry a skilful advocate has a great advantage over an unskilled military witness and in a series of questions can confuse him and make him eat his own words, which is obviously unfair. It would be more equitable if a military court investigated such cases and there is no reason to suggest that the conclusion it came to would not be just and proper. If, however, an officer or soldier is summoned to appear before a Public Court it would only be just to provide him with counsel. Dyer had refused such aid when offered.

During 1920-21 political agitation increased and was directed against the Government. The word "Swaraj" (somewhat undefined in meaning) came into use and the practice of "non-co-operation" was introduced. "Congress National Volunteers" began to appear and set up committees in villages and the countryside. There were *hartals* and boycotts. Although the principle of "non-violence" was preached by leaders, the activities of their followers were often inconsistent with these ideals. The All-India Muslim League had supported the Indian National Congress in the "non-co-operation" movement, but when disorders broke out in many Provinces in 1921 they showed clearly the differences, mainly religious, between the Hindu and Muslim factions.

Matters came to a head in August 1921 when the Mapillas of Malabar rose in open revolt. These somewhat backward people, numbering about 700,000, were fanatical Muslims descended from the progeny of Arab traders who in past years had settled on the

west coast and mingled with the inhabitants. It seems they were influenced by the misunderstood Khilafatist propaganda and believed that Government could no longer enforce law and order. In addition, being mostly only tenants, they had long-standing grievances against their Hindu landlords. They suddenly rose in rebellion, attacked and killed or drove out local Government officials and destroyed Government buildings and property. They then turned on the Hindu population, killing, raping, forcibly converting and burning houses and property.

The task of restoring order was left to the troops of Madras District under Major-General "Tom" Humphreys. Communications were difficult and parts of Malabar are hilly and densely wooded. Thus completion of the rounding up of the insurgents was delayed, but there was never any need to use undue force. The only unfortunate incident was when a party of Mapilla prisoners was being sent by train to Madras for trial. They were placed in covered goods wagons with insufficient ventilation and several died before the journey was ended. They had, however, been handed over to the Civil Power and were under Police guard and so the Army was in no way responsible.

In the early days of the localised Madras Army, there had been a battalion which included a large number of Mapillas. Lord Kitchener, when reorganising the Indian Army, recommended that this unit be disbanded as unsuitable for employment with a "Field Army", whose units might be located anywhere in India. He was confronted with strong opposition on political and economic grounds and his proposal was rejected. He did not like being thwarted and determined to get rid of the Mapillas by hook or crook.

The Mapillas had curious religious customs in the preparation and eating of their food and used to remove most of their clothing for these purposes. In the warm and humid climate of Malabar this presented no difficulty. But Lord Kitchener waited until late autumn, sent the unit by train to the Derajat in northern India, with orders to march to Quetta through the Rakhni Pass and over the high plateau of Northern Baluchistan. It was a very long march, taking many days and the temperature was not conducive to removing one's clothes at meal times in the open. The Mapillas

contracted chills and pneumonia and a number of them died before reaching Quetta. Faced with this, the Government gave in and Lord Kitchener thus got rid of the Mapillas by somewhat drastic means.

The seeds sown in 1919-21 continued to bear bitter fruit over many years and on numerous occasions troops had to be called out to support the Civil Power. This is probably the most difficult and distasteful task a soldier has to undertake. The soldier is a servant of the State and as such is not concerned with politics, though as an individual and a citizen he may have his own political opinions. The British soldier in India had little or no knowledge of, or interest in, Indian politics or Indian religions and being quite impartial was always employed on Aid to the Civil Power when available. With the Indian soldier matters were different, for though he took little interest in politics and was a loyal servant of the State, he had definite religious affiliations and when factional disturbances were involved the strain upon him was very considerable.

Although the rank and file were kept aloof from politics as much as possible, Army Staffs had to keep in very close touch with general and local political trends and activities. They had to be aware, from day to day, of how these might affect the men of varied classes in the Indian Army or might lead to a local breach of the peace or threaten law and order. They had, therefore, to maintain close liaison with the Civil authorities and the Police.

The use of troops in Aid of the Civil Power—one of the main tasks of units allotted to Internal Security—was governed by sections of the Indian Penal Code. Roughly speaking, in times of threatened disorder the Civil authority could forbid the assembly of more than a few persons, the carrying of offensive weapons including *lathis* over a certain size and could impose curfews and other restrictions on movements. Such orders were widely promulgated and if disobeyed the Police, or Armed Police, had authority to enforce them. If the task became too much for the available Civil Forces, troops could be called on to assist.

When this occurred the troops were always accompanied by a magistrate. If several detachments of troops were required, each

had to have a magistrate and in later years it was found necessary to give Indian magistrates recognisable badges so that the troops could be aware of their presence. When a disturbance was threatened by an unlawful assembly, the magistrate could order it to disperse and, if the order was disobeyed, could direct the Civil Police to disperse it. If they failed, the magistrate could request any troops held in readiness to disperse the mob, and once this request had been made the military commander became the sole judge of the type and degree of force to be used to carry out his task. Generally some warning by bugle or voice was given, though in an emergency requiring rapid action this was not legally necessary. In a similar manner, in Britain, in an emergency the reading of the Riot Act could be dispensed with. It was unfortunate that on some occasions the magistrates delayed abrogating their authority until the situation had got seriously out of control necessitating more severe measures than might earlier have been required.

The composition of the crowds who formed these unlawful assemblies was complex. There were a few leaders and organisers and their immediate supporters; a number of persons who had come to hear speeches out of curiosity and the hope of some excitement; a number of hooligans and bad characters ready to take advantage of any disturbance to profit by it and a few agents-provocateur ready to foment religious strife. This material was extremely "combustible" and it was not surprising that the instigators in exciting the crowd to a state of mass hysteria could raise the whirlwind but could not direct the storm. All these people knew quite well that they were breaking the law and when, in spite of warning, they persisted in this course, there could be scant sympathy for them if they got into trouble. It was unfortunate that the hooligan element wanted a disturbance, and when trouble started they began to break and loot shops, commit arson and robbery with violence, so that the innocent often suffered more than the guilty.

There are certain principles—often disregarded—by which troops are used to disperse mobs. The soldier is not a policeman, is not trained as one and has no powers of arrest except under Martial Law. Thus he should never be brought into close contact with a crowd and should only use the weapons with which he is equipped.

Such weapons as batons, clubs, shields, rifle butts and tear-gas grenades are for the Police, or what are now called "Riot Squads". The soldier should only be used as a last resort, when Civil Forces have failed. When he is used, law breakers should know quite clearly that he will use the weapons with which he is armed and may use them to kill. To fail in making this clear is unfair to both the public and the soldier. It postulates, however, that when the soldier is used, Civil Forces must be withdrawn temporarily until his task is accomplished.

The main weapon for Internal Security duties is the rifle which can most easily be controlled so that the minimum force only is used to accomplish any particular task. The rifle is like a water-tap; it can deliver one drop, or a few drops, or a jet. It can be turned on and off in a moment. It can be directed where it will have the most effect and its application is selective. Often single shots, directed against ringleaders, may be sufficient to disperse a mob. On other occasions, according to circumstances, squads of varying size can be used, but always firing can be strictly controlled by "counted rounds" per man. Sometimes the aim can be directed "low", to wound and not to kill but firing in the air over the heads of a crowd is very dangerous. It may give the crowd the impression that the troops do not mean business and thereby encourage them. Also, any bullet that is fired must find its billet and there have been many cases where innocent people, in upper storeys of houses or as far distant as a mile from the area of disturbance have been killed or injured.

The moment a mob starts to disperse, whether before or after firing by the military, the Police should again take up the task of keeping it moving. This is not a task for troops and it is essential that the Civil Power should again take control at the earliest possible moment.

There are occasions when Armoured Cars or Tanks can be used with advantage when disturbances are threatened. In cities their range of vision is limited; it is difficult to send magistrates with them or to control their machine-gun fire so as to use minimum force, and they are vulnerable to home-made petrol bombs, or road blocks. They can be usefully employed to patrol streets during curfews, to cordon disaffected areas or to keep areas con-



taining rival factions isolated. Thus they may release Police for duties requiring closer contact with the public. Aircraft have been used on occasion in emergencies in rural districts when the Police have not been available. But pilots cannot, from the air, distinguish the guilty from the innocent and regrettable mistakes have been made, both with small bombs and machine-gun fire. Aircraft can, however, be used for leaflet dropping and sometimes this is effective.

There are times when troops—and Police—are either attacked with sticks and other weapons or subjected to stone and bottle throwing. Every citizen—and a soldier has the same rights as a citizen—has a right of self-defence provided he does not use undue force in exercising it. When a party of troops is attacked or stoned, whether a magistrate is present or not, the Commander exercises the right of self-defence on behalf of his men and can take such action as he deems fit for their protection. Sometimes when stone-throwing attacks were made the crowd covered its front with a screen of children on any sign of retaliation. A counter to this was to send a rifle-man up onto a building with orders to direct fire on ringleaders in rear. In any event, whether a magistrate is present or not, a commander is always responsible to higher military authority for the safety of the force he commands and can take immediate action if he fears that it may be overwhelmed.

There were occasions when crowds blocked roads, junction points and bridges by lying down in the roadway and refusing to move. Their removal is not a task for troops because it brings them into close contact with the public. Similar obstructions took place on railway tracks. Here a useful counter was for an engine driver to open the forward belly-cocks on his engine and move slowly forward. The scalding steam soon cleared the way without any casualties.

In those turbulent days which followed World War I closely there were contrasts. At an Indian friend's house in Simla I had the pleasure to meet Pundit Motilal Nehru (father of Jawaharlal) on two occasions. He was a most charming old gentleman. We talked of cabbages and kings, and politics was never mentioned. I think he regarded me as a young irresponsible nitwit but was much too courteous to show it. On the second occasion when I

met him, Lala Lajpat Rai was present and waxed eloquent with stories about the "Monkey Temple" on the summit of Jakko Hill, its devotees and priests. It never entered my head that, within a few years, he would be jailed for subversive activities!

## IX

### *Opening up the North-West Frontier*

AS HAS already been noted, for many years past the Frontier tribes had given trouble from time to time, necessitating expensive punitive expeditions to check their depredations on the inhabitants of the settled districts in the Indus valley. Their troubles were mainly economic and were increased when their traditional pastime of raiding was curtailed.

The Third Afghan War which ended officially in August 1919, left behind a peck of North-West Frontier troubles. The Pathan tribes, from the Mohmands in the north to the Mahsuds in South Waziristan, were in a state of great unrest and several of the irregular "Scout" Corps which, normally, kept them in some sort of order had practically ceased to exist. Although the Afghan Government under Amir Amanullah Khan had agreed to certain terms under the Treaty of Rawalpindi it was dilatory in carrying them out and continued to give the restless tribes moral support, though their promises of material help failed to be fulfilled.

The Afridi tribes of Tirah had a sharp lesson in fighting near Ali Masjid in the Khaibar and their main fort at Chora had been destroyed. A railway was under construction in the Pass and this supplied them with employment and money. So they remained quiet. Further south the Wazir clans had participated in the siege of Thal-in-Kurram and had destroyed posts in the Tochi valley. In South Waziristan the Mahsud clans had been involved in the loss of the major post at Wana, by which they obtained stocks of rifles and ammunition. Thereafter, with the Wana Wazirs, they penetrated into North Baluchistan attacking posts and convoys. All these tribes were ripe for punishment and something had to be done about them speedily.

The various campaigns in Waziristan during the first few years after World War I have been fully documented and it is only necessary to summarise the main course of events. In November 1919

a force of about one Division under Major General Climo moved up the Tochi valley to Datta Khel, close to the Afghan border, where the leading Wazir Maliks accepted terms of peace. The Mahsuds were the next to be dealt with and it was decided to advance into their country by the valley of the Tank (Takki) Zam ultimately to strike at their capital Kaniguram. Climo's troops were therefore moved round to Jandola at the mouth of the Tank Zam in December 1919 and became Wazirforce with Headquarters at Dera Ismail Khan in the Derajat.

The advance of the force began at once and was checked at Mandanna Kach, some 5 miles beyond Jandola. The Mahsuds, probably the toughest fighters on the Frontier, massed in strength and were not thrown back until December 25th, after very severe fighting. Shortly after this, Major General Andrew Skeen succeeded General Climo in command and reached Kotkai, 7 miles from Jandola on January 7th, 1920. Fierce opposition continued and time was required to construct the permanent piquets which protected the Line of Communications in the Tank Zam. From Kotkai the advance continued slowly and methodically until strong opposition was encountered at the Ahnai Tangi where the Zaghbir stream joins the Tank Zam some 12 miles from Jandola. Here the Mahsuds again massed for defence; there was severe fighting for two days but the narrow gorge was finally passed by a night march on January 28th.

The battle at Ahnai Tangi broke Mahsud resistance and pushing on faster the force reached Tauda China on the Dara Toi stream, 26 miles from Jandola, on February 16th. This was within easy distance of the Mahsud area of Makin which contains a number of hamlets and towers and was shelled. Thereafter the leading Brigade of the force withdrew 6 miles south-westwards to Ladha. From here Kaniguram the Mahsud capital, 4 miles south-west was visited but not damaged. Wazirforce was now "on top" of the Mahsud country; a permanent camp was constructed at Ladha and the force remained here in occupation, being supplied through the protected Line of Communication from Jandola.

In November 1920 "Wanacol"—a Brigade Group—under Major General Walter Leslie moved westwards from Jandola *via* Sarwekai and reoccupied Wana without much difficulty, remain-

ing in occupation there. This completed the penetration of Mahsud and Wana Wazir country.

During World War I the Staff Colleges at Camberley and Quetta had been closed, but were reopened in 1922. The first competitive Entrance Examination was held in the Spring of 1921 and I was fortunate to secure a vacancy for the first post-war course of 2 years at Quetta where I joined in February 1922. Normally the students were in two Divisions, the Juniors being first year men, the Seniors being in their second year. In 1922, on reopening, the Senior Division comprised officers who had been selected on War Service, without Entrance Examination, for a one year course. They professed to know more than their Instructors and were dubbed the "Bolshie Brigade". They included many who later rose high in the service including "Pug" (later Lord) Ismay with whom I worked later.

In the autumn of each year the students were given a "break" of one month. They needed it but their Instructors needed it more! In August 1922, in company with a fellow student, I decided to employ this "break" by having a look at Wazirforce, still in occupation of the "Ladha Line". Brigadier (later General Sir) Eric de Burgh was then Chief Staff Officer with the Force and he kindly agreed to our coming, with the proviso that when we reached Jandola we would have to fend for ourselves and would be attached to no one. We did not mind this as we were both experts in the gentle art of "wangling" and what we could not beg we could always steal.

Our trip was duly sanctioned ("You will submit a full report on return") and in view of what we might expect we each prepared a bedding-roll, a kit bag for spare clothes and necessities, and a waterproof sheet. We had to carry our usual impedimenta of haversack, water-bottle, field glasses, maps and pistol. Quetta is famous for its peaches and in August they are in their prime. We filled two *yakhdans* (mule-boxes) with about 120 lbs. weight of selected peaches packed in layers with cardboard in between and each peach wrapped in tissue paper. On each box was a strong padlock. This fruit was to be our "Open Sesame" if all else failed.

When we reached Dera Ismail Khan it was still very hot. The only electric fans were in the hospital which had a small power

plant. There was still great shortage of mechanical equipment mainly spares, tyres and replacement vehicles. The latter, which supplemented the Decauville railway between Dera Ismail Khan and Tank, were getting worn out and replacements were in short supply. We were given a Ford Van which, after a series of mechanical catastrophies and burst tyres landed us at Jandola and left us without further means of support.

At that time there were three Indian Brigades on the Ladha Line; 10th (Manzai-Jandola), 21st (Kotkai-Sora Rogha), 9th (Piazza Raghza—Ladha). All these had to be supplied from Dera Ismail Khan and Tank.

We parked our impedimenta and began to look about for friends from whom we might "scrounge" board and lodging in accordance with Army custom. We soon found some, for the question, "Would you like some peaches?" evoked replies of "Peaches? Come inside"! By this means we secured Honorary Membership of a Mess, a spare tent to sleep in and a *drabi* (Driver) and 3 pack mules for the onward march. ("You can keep them as far as Sora Rogha and then try for others.") Thus next morning we set forth on our march to Ladha, escorting the *drabi* and our three pack mules. The latter were sociable though not affectionate animals and we grew quite fond of them.

The so-called "road" wandered in and out of the gravelly, boulder-strewn bed of the Tank Zam which, normally, carried only a trickle of water. We could only march by day, tagging onto convoys during hours of "Road Open". At dusk there was "Road Closed". It was very hot and hard going in the bed of the stream. Just outside Jandola there had at one time been a bridge, of which only a few masonry abutments remained. The bed of the Tank Zam is about 200 yards broad at that place and we had to wade knee deep through the only channel which held water. The bridge had been washed away in a spate and no one had had the time to build another, even if such a work was feasible.

August was the season of thunderstorms and spates, the latter being highly dangerous. The arrival of a spate in Waziristan has to be seen to be believed. There may be a thunderstorm some miles away in the catchment area and first a small trickle of water appears in the dry bed of the stream. Within a few minutes this

is followed by a wall of water about a foot deep and within the next few minutes the bed of the stream is a raging torrent several feet deep. On the Line of Communications special measures were in operation to give "Spate Warning". When a permanent piquet, high above the river, saw a spate coming, it fired a Red Very-Light and this signal was taken up by other piquets lower down. At once everyone and every animal got out of the bed of the stream and as high up on either side as possible. Later, when the main spate had passed, the piquets fired Green Very-Lights and the march could be resumed. Sometimes it was necessary to wait as long as two hours for the water to subside.

Just above the camp at Jandola the Shahur river, flowing from the direction of Sarwekai and the Wana plain, joins the Tank Zam at Shahur Tangi. This is a canyon some half mile long and about 30 yards broad with precipitous sides. Normally one can walk through it beside a shallow stream running in a boulder strewn bed. But a "High water mark" some 60 feet up on the cliff-like sides shows the depth of water in a spate. When the latter comes a vast volume of water is spewed out into the Tank Zam, and if this comes when the main stream is itself in spate, it is said that the whole gravelly bed of the river to a depth of 40 feet starts to move. Thus no bridge whose piers do not reach down to the rock below has any hope of survival.

We ended the first day's march at Kotkai and it was evident that the fame of our peaches had gone ahead of us, for we were inundated with offers of hospitality. Indeed, throughout our tour of Wazirforce, we were overwhelmed with offers of shelter and food. Next day we reached Sora Rogha after passing through Ahnai Tangi, the scene of fierce fighting in 1920. Here we had to wait a day for "Road Opening" and took the opportunity to go out with a South Waziristan Scout *gasht* (patrol) to Matai Ghar (4744 feet) which overlooks the Jalal Khel territory. This clan was, perhaps, the least civilised of all the Mahsuds, living in wretched hamlets and caves in an isolated area. They were tough customers and had provided much of the opposition during the actions at Ahnai Tangi. Their country is seldom penetrated (I went through it with Razmak Column in 1934) and is a maze of scrub covered ridges and ravines. I thought we stayed rather too long on the summit

AN INDEPENDENT



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Yank

**Muraza**

**Dera Iqbal Khan**

Mode of Transport	Miles
Car	45
Train	25
Boat	10
Plane	5



of the hill and when we started to withdraw, the bullets began to fly. However, there were no casualties and no "follow up".

We had to say good-bye to our first lot of mules but scrounged another three for the last stage. (More peaches!). Ladha is 14 miles from Sora Rogha and the route passes through a narrow, wooded valley passing the Barari Tangi, where the Barari Algad (stream) joins the Tank Zam. On this stage no one with a convoy—except when with a body of troops—was allowed to carry arms as it was held that the sight of these might induce lurking tribesmen to attack. Only two days before the Indian Army Service Corps officer in charge of a convoy had been approached in the Barari Tangi by two, apparently, unarmed tribesmen and fatally stabbed as he sat on his horse. So, reluctantly, our pistols had to go into the boxes with the peaches.

On this final stage of the Line of Communication we came across the newly introduced *Khassadars*, local tribesmen employed on minor road protection duties. This was a leaf taken out of the Afghan book, where *Khassadars* were largely used for road protection and escorting officials and travellers. The whole of the Ladha line was guarded by permanent piquets but between Sora Rogha and Ladha the valley sides are thick with scrub and small river-side patches of cultivation into which the piquets could not see and into which tribesmen could infiltrate during the night. It was the duty of the *Khassadars* to search these places at dawn and show that each was clear by hanging out a small piece of white cloth. These men, armed with rifle and knife, wore a small badge on their *pagris*, but were not very reliable. Later they were introduced into other parts of Waziristan and elsewhere. It was prudent never to let a *Khassadar* walk behind you—the wise man always made him walk in front! Moving along, unarmed, with a convoy under these conditions was not very pleasant. It was like walking naked through a shoulder-high bed of nettles wondering if one would get through without being stung!

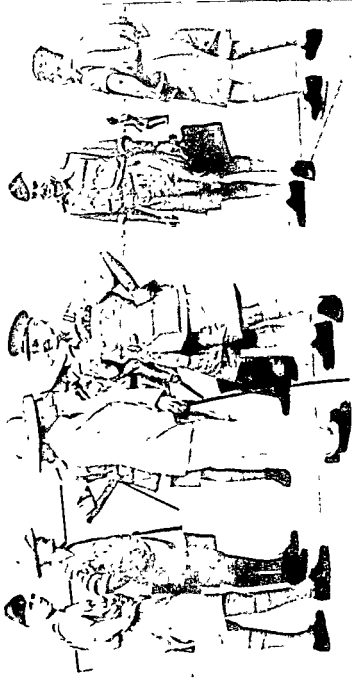
The manning of the permanent road protection piquets on the 28 miles of Communications used up a great many men. Excluding "Camp piquets" at Jandola, Kotkai, Sora Rogha, Piazza Raghza and Ladha there were upwards of 60 road piquets with an average strength of one platoon each. Each piquet had a breast-high



North of Razmak Narai, near Greenwood Corner.

A way-side bazar near Thal in Kurram.





The arrival of Wavell as C-in-C on July 11, 1941. Left to right: Wing Commander Perry-Keene, Colonel G. Nadin, Lieutenant General E. Norton, Sir Hugh Dow (Governor of Sind), Field Marshal Wavell, Major General Molesworth and Squadron Leader Burberry.

dry stone wall, a perimeter ditch and barbed-wire apron and embrasures for Lewis guns. Most piquets had part of the interior covered by a tent roof to give shelter from sun, rain and snow. Spaces contained reserves of rations, ammunition, Mills grenades, Very-Lights, tools and 'First Aid Post. Most were connected to sector headquarters by telephone. Cooking was generally done outside the piquet and sanitation had to be carefully watched. Water storage was limited and there was very little for washing. All piquets were heavily infested with fleas. The normal term of duty for a garrison ranged from 3 to 7 days.

The names of the piquets—some of which were famous for the fighting necessary to establish them—showed much nostalgic ingenuity and references to unit Battle Honours. From them, one could almost tell which unit had constructed them. Among many others were Tim, Posh, Mud, Whitechapel, Marble Arch, Park Lane, Gibraltar, Dreadnought, Strand, Piccadilly, Ascalon, Pekin, Kowloon, Umbrella and Parasol.

The physique and efficiency of the Indian troops—who formed the large majority of those in Wazirforce—was quite different from what it had been during the Afghan Campaign of 1919, when there was a large proportion of half-trained youngsters, the older men were war-weary and morale was very low. In 1922 morale was high and all ranks well trained. In the piquets we visited, the men were not uncomfortable and were alert and cheerful. The main trouble was the monotony of sitting day after day on a hill top overlooking a jumble of scrub-covered ridges and ravines where there was no visible sign of life. Thus men suffered from an endemic Frontier disease known as *kila-bandi*, meaning, being shut up in a fort and unable to get out. This is bad for both training and morale and makes it difficult to keep men physically and mentally fit. It can lead to slackness in routine duties which, in Waziristan, could spell disaster. It was noticeable how men in a piquet responded to the arrival of a visitor who could talk to them and tell them something of what was going on in the outside world.

In the camps, where men went when they came off piquet duty, things were made as comfortable as possible, but there were few amenities. Available space for recreation was very limited and recourse had to be made to such games as basket-ball where only

a small pitch was required. The rations were good and sufficient but somewhat lacking in variety. Fruit and vegetables deteriorated rapidly in transit in great heat. Meat—sheep and goats—was purchased locally from the “enemy” and dressed in Field Butcheries. Bread was baked in the camps in Field Bakeries.

There were still occasions when piquets were attacked at night or gangs infiltrated during hours of darkness to line up and attack convoys, but these had become increasingly rare excitements. The Pathan tribesman is a very wily bird. He watches carefully and when he finds that a unit is alert and efficient he leaves it severely alone. But, when he finds a unit which is indolent or ignorant he can give it a lot of trouble. It cannot be said that the tribesman is a clean fighter for he (and his women-folk) will mutilate the wounded or dead who fall into his hands. He takes bullets, bayonets, *kukris*, grenades and shells as all part of the game, though he may not like them and does not like getting killed. But he strongly objects when people try to be “too clever” and lay booby-traps or leave bags of “doctored flour” lying about. Such things annoy him and he starts to get his own back.

There was a British battalion at Ladha when we got there. They provided the garrison for a piquet called Prospect, on high ground between camp and Kaniguram. The long track to this piquet ran through thickets which obscured the view both from the piquet and camp. Thus it was not a pleasant path to travel or loiter on. This British battalion had embarked on some “funny business”—I forget what—and the tribesmen who had been caught out were incensed and started a feud with the unit. They gave it a great deal of trouble and caused several casualties. Even in tribal war fare there is a certain code of ethics which it is unwise to disregard.

At this time a great scheme for a Circular Road in Waziristan was coming off the drawing boards. The idea was that such a road, available for Armoured Cars and Motor Transport, would eventually link roads from Peshawar and Bannu with Wana, Jandola and the roads of Northern Baluchistan as far south as Quetta. It would open up the country, enable recalcitrant tribes to be dealt with speedily and benefit the tribesmen economically. A major feature of the plans was the establishment of a strong camp on the Razmak Plateau, through which the Wazir-Mahsud border ran.

We were able to go to a position on a ridge north-west of Ladha and see, far to the north, a hill said to overlook the Razmak Narai—possibly that on which Alexandra Ridge piquet was later sited.

Our return trip was uneventful and by the time we again reached Jandola our peaches were exhausted. Here we got another Ford Van and set out for Dera Ismail Khan. It was very hot. By the time we reached Tank, the tyres had burst and our spare tyres and tubes were in use. At Tank they would only let us have three derelict outer covers and two heavily patched inner tubes. It was then late in the afternoon but we decided to push on the 40 miles over a desolate plain to Dera Ismail Khan. As we went tyre after tyre burst at intervals until no more inner tubes were serviceable. In the dark we packed the burst covers with a coarse plant growing by the roadside and finally staggered into Headquarters about midnight, tired, dirty, hungry and thirsty. We got a "wiggling" for the road was "Closed" at dusk and there were known to be two raiding gangs in the area. Next morning we looked at our hands. They were dark blue! The plants we had used for tyre packing were Wild Indigo and it was some weeks before the stain wore off.

In January 1923 the first stage of the Circular Road scheme began with the advance of the 7th Brigade from Idak in the Tochi valley to the Razmak plateau. The Makin area was again shelled and new towers destroyed. The road began to follow and, as time went on, the great camp at Razmak was constructed.

I was at Razmak in 1933-34. The Camp and Circular Road with its spurs had been completed and the tribesmen were quiescent. Motor transport moved freely during hours of daylight. The camp held a Brigade of six infantry battalions with Pack Artillery, supporting troops, Pack Mule and Motor Transport, supply dumps, ancillary units and hospitals and covered a wide area. The lengthy perimeter consisted of a built up breast-work with machine-gun posts and a barbed-wire apron. There were a few masonry buildings, such as Brigade Headquarters, but most of the troops lived in wooden hutments and at least one infantry battalion was in tents in the "Lower Camp". Outside the perimeter was a ring of permanent masonry piquets, the largest being Alexandra Piquet overlooking the Razmak Narai, 5 miles to the north of the camp. This was really a small fort with a garrison of 100 rifles. At all

times the Razmak Brigade was on an Active Service footing, moving with loaded rifles and artillery ammunition.

Space inside the camp was somewhat cramped, but there was room for basket-ball pitches, hard tennis courts and squash courts. Outside the perimeter a slope had been cleared to provide a *Brigade Parade Ground* on which athletics, football, hockey and periodical race meetings were indulged in. In spite of athletics and training near the camp, time was inclined to hang heavily—a repetition of the Frontier *kila-bandi* already mentioned. Razmak was known as “the largest monastery in the world with ten thousand men and not a single woman”. There were of course no families there and even hospital nurses were banned. Life tended to be monotonous and many people longed for the monthly “Columns” when the Brigade went out along the roads for 3 or 4 days.

Razmak was not unhealthy. It was situated 6,835 feet above sea level, not too hot in summer but bitterly cold with snow in winter. In spite of congestion there was no serious illness, though men contracted “Frontier boils and sores” which were difficult to get rid of and the sick rate was low. Generous leave to India was given to all ranks, and so the two year tour of duty was not too arduous.

The Brigade was well situated to keep the peace. It was on the border between Wazir and Mahsud and within the 6 inch Howitzer range of the Mahsud area of Makin. It was “on top of the tribes” and instead of having to fight *upwards* along valleys when punitive action was necessary to maintain peace, it could strike *downwards* in many directions; south to Mahsud Kaniguram, north-west over the Lwargai Narai to Datta Khel in the Tochi valley and eastwards towards Jandola. Its mere presence at Razmak had a restraining influence on those who wished to make trouble. It was possible for the first time for individuals to move about in Waziristan provided they stuck to the road, did not go more than a few feet from it and did not loiter near villages. On two occasions with my Subedar-Major (a Pathan) I went past Kaniguram and over the Lare Lar Narai to Tiaza Scout Post and Wana in a car hired (with driver) from a Mahsud contractor. It was normally quite safe to travel from Razmak to Peshawar *via*

Spinwam, Thal-in-Kurram and Kohat by car. Previously, in 1932, I had made the complete trip by car from Quetta to Peshawar, almost entirely through tribal territory without any escort.

"Razcol," as the Brigade Column was called, used to go out for 3 or 4 days each month to demonstrate that it was free to move about where it wished and woe betide anyone who tried to stop it. It moved under active service conditions providing its own route and camp protection. The units comprising it were all expert at the somewhat special requirements of Tribal Warfare. When a new unit came to Razmak it had to be "Shepherded" for some months and this was particularly the case with British battalions which only came for a tour of duty of one year and whose men were not nearly so fast on the hills as Indians. My own view was that some of this excellent training and "coat-trailing" was dangerous. Often with a long march ahead the column went so fast that supporting artillery and machine-guns had no time to get into position adequately to cover the movements of the Advance Guard and Piqueting Troops. My views were unpopular but, soon after I left Razmak, the Column got into trouble for that very reason.

Whether the placing of a Brigade at Razmak and the building of the circular road had brought any lasting economic benefit to the tribesmen is a matter of conjecture. The actual road construction and subsequent maintenance gave employment for tribal labourers. Tribal contractors benefited from the sale of sheep and goats on the hoof to the camp. The introduction of *Khassadari* for road protection and other minor duties also gave employment to a comparative few. Otherwise tribal areas produce very little, for the Pathan is a bad cultivator. It is probable that "Political Allowances" continued to provide the main source of revenue. That there was some increased prosperity was evidenced by the appearance of a crop of new "towers" but it may be that most of the financial benefit found its way into pockets of the few.

It is, of course, impossible to change the customs and habits of tribal clans in a generation, nor to wipe out at once centuries old feuds and disputes. But the existence of the roads and the closer contacts they brought with the civilization of the settled districts of India could not fail to have some effect on the outlook of the tribesmen. There arose some interest in education among



the previous occupier) which were brought out by the *mali* each evening and put back in the shade of trees each day when the sun got too hot.

The bungalow was a rambling building with large and lofty rooms and deep verandahs guarded by a line of serrated metal to discourage snakes. Nearby was an annexe which had at one time been a *zanana khana* and at the end of the Dining Room was an ornate carved and pierced wooden screen, behind which the *purdah* ladies could take their meals while the master of the house entertained his guests. Behind the bungalow was a large paved yard with quarters for 20 servants, stabling for 12 horses and 2 camels and a range of godowns and coach-houses. At one time there had been a stable for an elephant but all that remained were some foundations and a series of heavy metal rings to which the animal could be tethered.

In the yard close to the house was the long stone grave of some forgotten Muslim *Pir*. It was not long before my servants came with a tale that they had seen the *Pir* mounted on a white horse riding round the yard in the dead of night. I took no notice until he had, apparently, been seen several times. The ghost had to be laid as it was becoming a nuisance. Several yards of mauve muslim and half-a-dozen *dewali* rush-lights were procured and the grave covered and illuminated at night. No more was heard of the nocturnal visitor but the monthly bill for oil for the lamps shook my faith in his existence. I never saw him myself, probably because I was not tuned in to the wave-length to receive him.

In and around the Cantonment were many examples of Mogul architecture, among them the large and well preserved tomb of Salabat Khan, a somewhat unknown Mogul General who must have amassed many ill-gotten gains to erect such an imposing Mausoleum, a landmark for miles around. To the British soldier this was always known as the tomb of "Sir Albert Cohen"—presumably a mediaeval Jewish financier.

The Fort at Ahmednagar—either Mogul or Mahratta—had been captured by Sir Arthur Wellesley from the Mahrattas on August 11th 1803. It had a massive outer wall, some 40 feet high and on three sides a broad ditch or moat (dry) some 30 feet deep. This was spanned at the main and only gate by draw-bridge

(which no longer worked). Above the Gate were some State apartments, which in bygone days had housed members of the exiled Afghan royal family, and also a range of guard rooms and stores. Within was an empty grassy space of about one acre. Later my knowledge of this Fort was to come in very useful.

In Ahmednagar, as in many other parts of the Deccan, water shortage was a problem and generally the piped supply was shut off at 7.0 a.m. and not restored until 7.0 p.m. So water for the day had to be stored in baths and receptacles. The water was chlorinated and frequently the operator when shutting off the water forgot to shut off the chlorine which accumulated in the tanks. As a result people were nearly gassed when the water came on. But the water shortage had other dangers.

One day a house in the Cantonment bazar caught fire. There was a Cantonment Fire Engine (manual) and a party to pump but the water was turned off and the man in charge could not be found. The Municipal Fire Engine was sent for. It was located some 3 miles away and was drawn by two oxen. The latter were away ploughing, and it took an hour to collect them and another hour for the engine to reach the fire. When it did arrive there was still no water and so half the bazar was destroyed. Ahmednagar was all rather like that.

Aurangabad, where one Indian battalion of the Brigade was stationed, was some 80 miles north-east of Ahmednagar and in Hyderabad State. The journey to it had to be made by road and the Godavari river had to be crossed. There was no bridge; only a small pontoon for vehicles when the river was in flood and at other times a ford some three feet deep. The banks were high and the approaches to pontoon and ford narrow and steep. We had several disasters trying to get cars across and finally had to leave a car on the near side of the river and be met by one from Aurangabad on the far side. At that time, travellers on many trunk roads in India had similar troubles with unbridged rivers.

H.H. The Nizam used to hold periodical Durbars at Aurangabad. The Nizam of that time had a reputation for some excentricity and "close fisted-ness". Thus even on ceremonial occasions he avoided any display of wealth in his dress. It was the custom for the Durbaris who were summoned to attend to make gifts to

details instead of leaving them to commanding officers who were often prone to petty jealousies.

The atmosphere of Trichy was still that of Clive and the East India Company. Clive's house was still there but now occupied by someone who sold petrol and automobiles. There was a very large rectangular Parade Ground along one side of which were the two-storeyed, flat-roofed houses where officers of the Company's regiments lived. I was allotted one of these where, it was said, a Cavalry Commandant had lived in the early years of the 19th century. It was said that he used to sleep on the roof and in the early hours of the morning rise from his bed, and, while clad in his night shirt, drill his regiment drawn up on the Parade Ground below. He then probably went to bed again.

At one end of this Ground were elephant stables, still in a good state of repair. Over a century ago—perhaps in those very stables—an elephant died suddenly under suspicious circumstances. The General ordered a Court of Enquiry to assemble to investigate the matter and report. The Court duly met, viewed the body of the elephant and reported that, "The elephant is dead and smells bad." The General was very annoyed and ordered the Court to reassemble and submit a proper report. It did so and recorded, "We have again viewed the body of the elephant. We are of the opinion that it is still dead and smells worse." The General's remarks are not on record.

The old Officers' Mess was a large rambling building with an imposing pillared Palladian front. It was said to have been built early in the 19th century by a Lieutenant of the Madras Army as a private residence. He must somehow have amassed considerable wealth to erect so large a house. Nearby was an old cemetery containing a number of elaborate stone memorials. The inscriptions showed that they were the resting places for officers of the Madras Army, circa 1825. The majority of them were between 20 and 25 years of age. Most of these young men had died of disease, the main killer being Cholera. It is probable that many of the deaths were occasioned by the habits of that time, when large meals were taken during the afternoon and a great deal of wine was consumed. Those who survived these customs must have been extremely hardy.

The "lines" for the Indian battalion were of comparatively modern construction and the greatest enemy there was the termite which could not be eliminated though many anthills were dug out and destroyed. Here, as in all the bungalows, no windows were glazed but were fitted with wooden shutters. Trichy was never cool, even in the winter months. When the south-west monsoon arrived, it dropped all its rain on the Western Ghats and came on over the Trichy plain as a strong, hot wind raising clouds of reddish dust. The window shutters could not be closed because of the heat and one lived in a minor hurricane for at least three months. Sheets had to be tied to beds with tapes, papers on tables weighted down with stones, and everything had a layer of gritty dust. It was the most wearing climate I have ever experienced.

The drying wind was, however, excellent for drying tobacco which constituted one of Trichy's staple industries employing a large number of men and women. Perhaps the largest manufacturer of Cigars and Cheroots was Messrs. Spencer of Madras but there was a large number of small factories. The cigars of many sizes and qualities were made from Indian tobacco with an outer Manila leaf. The rolling was done by hand, mainly by women who were expert at it. They placed the exact amount of tobacco on the outer leaf, dabbed on some paste from a dubious looking galley-pot much frequented by flies and wasps, and with a single movement rolled the cigar on a bare, perspiring thigh. I gave up smoking cigars after a visit to a factory.

The men of my battalion did not like Trichy. They came from northern India, and the local population, who had not seen Indian troops for some years, regarded them as "Kabulis". Speaking *Urdu* and *Punjabi* they only made themselves understood with difficulty, and what they could buy in the City was not to their liking. They kept away from it and got all they required from the battalion *Bunnia*. The Indian Officers tried to entertain some old Madrassi pensioners but could make little headway with them and finally gave it up.

The role of the battalion was Internal Security, particularly to aid the Civil Power if there should be any disturbance in the City. No doubt there was some apprehension that there might be trouble, otherwise we should not have been sent to Trichy where there

had not been a battalion for several years. It was necessary that we should know how the City was laid out and how to find our way about in it. By day the streets and alleys were thronged with people but deserted by night. Therefore, in co-operation with the Magistrates and Police, we carried out exercises on moonlit nights between midnight and 3.0 a.m. What the citizens, peering from behind shutters, thought of the silent nocturnal passage of bodies of armed men through the City, no one knew for no comments were made. But the exercises may have had a beneficial effect, for while we were there, we were never once called out.

The people of that part of the Madras Presidency were predominantly Hindu. To the south of Trichy were Tamils who seemed to be among the poorest and most backward of the people of India. Many of them got a bare existence living on lizards and what they could catch in swamps and jungles. Many were untouchables. In villages towards Madura and further south, high-caste Hindus used to put out food for them by the road-side but they were not allowed to come and get it until the donor had once more entered his house. The Ceylon Immigration authority had its Headquarters in Trichy. The Ceylon Government limited the flow of Indian labour to the Tea Plantations and would not allow Indian labourers to remain longer than a fixed number of years, nor to settle in Ceylon. To allow unrestricted immigration would have meant the swamping of the indigenous Sinhalese people in a comparatively short time. On the other hand the Tea industry needed more labour than was locally available.

The Immigration authority had a large compound with a number of hutments and at frequent intervals, parties of about 100 Tamils, who were candidates for employment in Ceylon gathered for medical examination, registration and onward passage. Similarly parties returning after a period of a few years in the Tea plantations arrived to be checked and sent to their homes. The difference between the outgoers and the homecomers was quite remarkable. Those starting out looked thin and undernourished with miserable bundles of possessions while those who returned were well set up, carried tin boxes and had obviously prospered. They were definitely well looked after and supervised during their sojourn in Ceylon. It seemed to me that some scheme of this na-

ture would have avoided a great many difficulties and much bitterness which arose from the importation of Indian labour to South Africa. Many years later I was for a short time in Durban and was shocked at the way "non-whites" were treated.

Around Trichy Roman Catholicism seemed to have made considerable headway. There was a number of Catholic seminaries and budding priests in black soutanes and red sashes, who could be seen walking out in parties. In the surrounding country there were many converts to be seen, but these appeared to come from the poorest classes and many were untouchables. Small chapels had obviously been converted from the shrines of other creeds, and with the aid of a paint-pot, images had become Catholic saints. Another coat of paint would very easily have re-transformed them. A Catholic funeral procession showed clearly the poverty of many converts. A coffin was more expensive than could be afforded. Thus, at the head of the cortege a white ceremonial coffin lid with a large black cross was carried by a mourner.

Two foreign possessions were within easy reach of Trichy. On the East Coast was the small French settlement of Pondicherry. It was hot and steamy, and from the old French houses one almost expected a door to open and M. Dupleix to step out onto the dusty street where most people seemed to dose in the shelter of doorways. No one seemed to be doing anything at all, the staple industry being smuggling into and from India. It was an anachronism and a dying settlement—if indeed it was not already dead.

Portuguese Goa on the West Coast was much larger in extent. The Portuguese, like the Arabs who settled in Malabar, encouraged their soldiers to marry people of the country and settle down. From them sprang the Goanese who are well known all over India and elsewhere. They are Catholics; they move into India because there is little employment for them in Goa. In the port of Goa there was still a certain amount of trade going on; the town was clean and well kept with some fine modern buildings. But further inland great ruined cathedrals, churches and palaces into which the jungle had grown, evoked memories of Albuquerque and the days when Portugal had been a great maritime power. Those days were gone for ever and apart from maintaining national prestige, Goa as a separate entity, was dead.

These two excursions into central and southern India, particularly the second, gave much food for thought. The differences of creed, customs, culture, habits and language among the varied races was clearly evident. One could only wonder if, when in due course, India achieved independence she could at the same time attain unity, or whether conflicting aspirations of her many parts would not tend to tear her apart into provincialism. There was an old saying that "Whoever controls the Army rules India". Perhaps as affairs developed in India over the years the Army might be forced to become the dominant factor in Indian politics?

## *The Years of Malaise—I*

A HISTORIAN is a slave to chronology but a mere scribe who is not so fettered, may roam at will as his fancy takes him and even venture on the perilous seas of a personality parade.

The two decades between World War I and World War II were a period of gradually increasing uneasiness and uncertainty in India from which no class was exempt. Yet, amidst the strains and stresses, few were prepared to express their anxieties openly. His Highness Udaibhan Singh, Maharaja of Dolpur and at one time Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, indicated his feelings in two of his New Year Greetings cards. In 1924 he wrote, "Friendship remains unaltered with changing times, policies and politics", and in 1929, "Even through a cloud of painful uncertainty of tomorrow happiness shines only in remembering ones good friends." It was a general expression of anxiety, showing that even the Princes looked with doubt on what the morrow might bring forth.

A thoughtful observer, viewing the political trends of the period could hardly have failed to conclude that sooner or later India would achieve some form of Independence, perhaps complete. The general demand for a greater say and responsibility in Government (whether in Internal or External affairs, or both) was far too strong to be rejected indefinitely. The real unknown factor was, "When will this come about?". It was unfortunate that no Prophet or Astrologer arose to foresee and give warning of a second World War and the radical changes which that was destined to bring. Perhaps the future was more apparent to Army thinkers than to those in day to day touch with politicians. When Independence came, the Indian Army would have to be ready to stand on its own feet and play its part. One cannot produce commanders and staff with the necessary knowledge and experience in the twinkling of an eye by the stroke of a politician's pen. They take



years of training to produce. Thus thoughts on this question had been going on for some time.

The Indian Army had evolved from the East India Company's "sepoy" regiments which were re-organised when the Company ceased to exist in 1858. The system by which the officers, down to Company Officer, were British and held their Commissions from the Monarch was perpetuated. Similarly Indian Officers—Subedars and Jemadars promoted from the ranks—held Viceroy's or Governor General's commissions. They had no powers of command over British troops. Prior to and during World War I a certain number of Indian gentlemen had been granted King's Commissions by selection on grounds of family and educational suitability. They had proved excellent soldiers and accepted by all ranks. The Indian Army had attained a great reputation in World War I and it was clearly necessary that this should receive recognition and reward. Some form of entry for Indian candidates for King's Commissions analagous to the Military College at Sandhurst was indicated.

In 1918 a first step was taken by allotting ten vacancies each year at Sandhurst for Indians who had competed among themselves for entry with a view to receiving King's Commissions. Such candidates were not eligible for Artillery, Engineer, Signals, Tank or Air arms of the Army in India.

In 1923 Lord Rawlinson when Commander-in-Chief introduced the "Eight Units Scheme" whereby Indians receiving a King's Commission were posted to units selected for "Indianization", namely two cavalry regiments, five infantry battalions and a Pioneer battalion. It was envisaged that these units would be completely officered by Indians by 1946, the British Officers having gradually been "wasted out". This scheme was designed as an "experiment" or "test" as it was then impossible to forecast the quantity or quality of Indians coming forward. In any case the scheme by itself did nothing to accelerate the "Indianisation" of the Indian Army.

In 1927 an "Indian Sandhurst" Committee was set up under the Chairmanship of General Sir Andrew Skeen, the Secretary being Sir Ernest Burdon. All the ten members were Indian gentlemen. As a result of their report the quota of yearly vacancies for

Indians at Sandhurst was increased to 20 and Indians became eligible for entry to the Military Academy at Woolwich and the Royal Air Force College at Cranwell. It was recommended that an "Indian Sandhurst" should be established by 1933—actually it came into being at Dehra Dun in 1934. The first Indian Officer to join the Staff College at Quetta was Captain Carriappa, later the first Commander-in-Chief of India's Union Army. It was in the same year that the Indian Air Force was formed with one Flight at Karachi.

The Committee recommended the abandonment of the "Eight Unit Scheme" but this was not accepted. The pros and cons of this scheme were widely debated, somewhat inconclusively. The Dehra Dun Military College was a great success and not all the young officers graduating were posted to the selected eight units. The views of the Viceroy's Commissioned officers, drawn from many classes, were mixed. Many felt that, as time went on, this class of officers might disappear and all its prospects for the rank and file be lost. Others felt that, for various reasons of caste and creed, Indian officers might not be so impartial as the British Officers who had no axe to grind and made promotions within a unit entirely on merit and the requirements of the service. Some feared a deterioration in efficiency. All these were matters debated at the time under conditions in which the future was not only obscure but bewildering. The real "proof of the pudding would only come in the eating".

In 1921 Lord Reading came to India as Viceroy, following Lord Chelmsford. During his five years of office his task was fraught with difficulty. On his arrival a certain person in Bombay distributed a leaflet headed "Rufus Isaacs and the Marconi ramp". Copies were sent to many Government officials throughout India. It was a most scurrilous document and it was difficult to say if it was actuated by personal spite to discredit Lord Reading or had its origin in anti-Semitism. Whether it was libellous or not it was ignored and the bad taste of its language destroyed any object the author may have had.

Lord Reading was probably the most outstanding Viceroy of the 20th century and had a clearer understanding of Indian politicians than any other. He was undoubtedly sympathetic to Indian

views but he could be very firm, and once he made up his mind he adhered to a decision—a quality not shared by some other Viceroys. Perhaps as a result of his experience at the Bar and in Parliament, when he spoke to you he almost shouted, but he was very approachable, kindly and was interested in a multitude of subjects.

A certain amount of unkind fun was made of his efforts to be a *shikari*, for no one could say that he was an "outdoor man". When he visited the jungles of the Terai and shot a tiger, the remarkable measurements of the animal caused raised eyebrows. It was said that the body of the beast had been "stretched" and that the only bullet wound found on it was in the tail. He certainly took great pains with his marksmanship, for on several occasions riding down to Annandale in the early morning, I saw him, with his Aides, practising rifle shooting. He, with Lady "Fanny" Reading, was very hospitable and there is no doubt that the latter enjoyed every minute of her time as Vicereine.

In 1922 I was back in Quetta. There were two remarkable personalities there. One was Dr. (later Sir) Henry Holland in charge of the Mission Hospital which was always in need of funds. Among many other accomplishments he was an acknowledged authority on Cataract of the Eye and specialists from all over the world came to learn from him. About that time there was in India another expert on this form of surgery in Colonel "Jullunder" Smith of the Indian Medical Service. He was a large man and even in the hottest weather breakfasted on meat and beer. Cataract was one of the major disabilities which troubled the Indian peasant and he would operate on 50 or more patients at a time, who were all prepared for him by his dressers. He would pass from one to another spending not more than a minute with each. All the time he held a large lighted cigar in his mouth. Asked if he did not think this was dangerous, he replied, "Cigar ash is the most aseptic thing in this world." Both Government and Mission hospitals did invaluable work in relieving the sufferings of the peasant while the surgeons of the latter, located near tribal areas, took many risks when operating on Pathans.

The other "character" was Mr. F. M. A. Beaty ("Franko"), Superintendent of Baluchistan Police. Many tales were told of his

exploits, some of them apocryphal. The suggestion that he was the original of Kipling's "Kim" cannot hold water and that he was once a trooper in the 12th Lancers is doubtful. He was born and bred in India and it is doubtful if he ever went to England—a subject which he used to avoid. In later years his father was a Turf Commission Agent in Madras. He first came to Quetta as a clerk in the Chief Commissioner's office under Rai Bahadur Diwan Jamiat Rai and later joined the Baluchistan Police. He had a great knowledge of the Vernacular and Frontier languages—Pashtu, Baluchi, Brahui and Sindhi—all of which he spoke fluently. It was said, truthfully, that as a young man he could pass anywhere as a Pathan. He was a first class shot with rifle and shot gun. As Superintendent of Police, little happened in Baluchistan without his knowledge and he was equally successful in tracing murderers as in recovering articles of ladies' underwear which had been lost by the *dhobi*.

Often his methods with criminals may have been criticised as *zabardasti*. On one occasion he heard that a gang of rifle thieves had come from Kandahar and got on the train at the Frontier station of Chaman. They were said to be carrying Rs. 30,000. He had them stopped at Quetta and brought for questioning. When asked about the sum of money they carried, they replied that it was to purchase melons. Kandahar is full of melons. Beaty took the money, bought the melons and sent the men back to Chaman with four truck loads of fruit—a case of "coals to Newcastle".

He had a great fund of humour, was hail-fellow-well-met with everyone and was known for his kindness and generosity. In May 1935 when the Great Earthquake struck Quetta, he and his wife were injured when their bungalow collapsed and his son, an Inspector of Police, was killed.

It was in 1922-23 that a financial disaster hit many people in Northern India. Prior to and during World War I the branches of the Imperial Bank of India had dealt mainly with Government accounts, and the public, with small accounts, dealt elsewhere. On coming to India I had an account with Messrs Ganga Sahai, well known Indian Bankers, as my father had before me. But later, to simplify matters in battalion accounting, I transferred my custom to the Punjab Banking Company which had branches all over

north India. Later this Bank was merged with the Alliance Bank of Simla.

The latter got into difficulties in the years immediately following World War I and was forced to close its doors. This took place on a date early in the month directly after the pay of many Government officials and Army officers had been credited to their accounts. There was consternation, for many officers were due to go on leave to the United Kingdom and found that the passage money for the steamer tickets they had booked was frozen. The Imperial Bank came to the rescue as far as Current Accounts were concerned, but no further. Deposit accounts were frozen; it took several years of small instalments before mine was paid in full. The failure caused much hardship in some quarters. The Bank staff were in jeopardy as regards pensions, savings and employment while many small people who had retired in India were hard hit.

In 1925 I was back in Simla for a third tour of duty. This time in the Quartermaster General's Branch in Section Q. 1 (Mobilisation and Co-ordination). My office was between those of the Quartermaster General and the Deputy Q.M.G., with doors opening into each. I was responsible to no Director but sat between the "upper and nether mill-stones" in danger of being ground to powder. All files which affected other Branches of Army Headquarters came to me and vice versa and I was responsible for seeing that my two bosses were kept informed of what was going on. On the Mobilisation side, apart from many other problems, I was closely involved in Transportation, Docks and Railway Movements. In addition to contacts with the Railway Board I was mainly concerned with officials of the North Western Railway, including Colonel Walton R. E., Mr. Lockwood, Chief Operating Superintendent and Mr. S. S. Gyani. In 1932 the latter's son, a King's Commissioned officer, was gazetted to the Royal Artillery at Larkhill.

Lieutenant General Sir George McMunn had been Quartermaster General from 1920 to 1924 and during his term of office the Inchcape Committee came to India to wield an economy "axe". At Army Headquarters, estimates were prepared giving the minimum requirements necessary to maintain the Army in India at a

strength sufficient for its particular tasks of Internal Security and Frontier Defence. Enquiries had been made from other areas where the "Inchcape Axe" had been wielded and it was found that, in general, a cut of 20 per cent had been recommended, in spending. A cut of this size would have been fatal to the efficiency of the Army and so, to avoid it, 20 per cent was added to the estimated minimum requirement. When the Inchcape Committee arrived and took evidence from heads of Branches at Army Headquarters, such a good case was made out that it only recommended an overall cut of 10 per cent! This left the Army with a surplus of 10 per cent over requirements—almost as embarrassing as a cut! General McMunn's able advocacy on behalf of the matters for which he was responsible was a major factor in this result.

My first boss was Lieutenant General Sir Richard Montagu-Stuart-Wortley, with Major General C. N. MacMullen as his Deputy. The former was a British Service officer and very easy to get on with. MacMullen, a very tall man, was an Indian Army officer whom I had known as a first rate commander during the Afghan Campaign of 1919, but was a person with very definite ideas of his own and a quick temper. As I saw both of them several times a day I soon grew to know how to deal with their peculiarities and all went very happily.

When General Stuart-Wortley retired he was succeeded by General (later Field Marshal) Sir Cyril Deverell, another British Service officer. "Dev" was a very different type of man. He had been a fine Corps Commander in France but had a reputation for ruthlessness. It was said that "he climbed to fame over the bodies of his men", but this was probably the view of those who disliked him. He was brusque and gruff in his manner when dealing with you. Much later, towards the end of World War II, I came in contact with him again in England after his retirement. I found him then a charming person and formed a great affection for him. Unfortunately he did not "hit it off" with General MacMullen.

After Lord Rawlinson's untimely death, Field Marshal Sir William (later Lord) Birdwood became Commander-in-Chief in November 1925. It has been written of him that "... He never had the opportunity of shining as a strategist or as an independent

commander. . . . He remained a "character", a virile personality rather than a master of war." That is a fair appreciation. He had been Military Secretary to Lord Kitchener and it was a super-Military Secretary that most people knew him. He never appeared to take much interest in the training of the Army nor in any plans for defence, leaving such matters to the Chief of the General Staff. In 1925 when *manoeuvres* were held in Baluchistan under Major General Sir Hastings Anderson and the three Army Commanders were bidden to attend, "Birdie" elected to go on a walking tour in the Naga Hills—about as far away as he could get.

With his great reputation he had a flair for making himself pleasant to all ranks and would go to great lengths to inform himself on officer's careers. On more than one occasion he asked me, in an aside, who, certain officers present were. On being told a few details, he would go up to them and greet them as though he had known them intimately for a long time. Once he was inspecting an Indian Army battalion—a function which he greatly enjoyed—which for some reason was very short of British Officers. The Commandant had, accordingly, arranged that officers with the foremost companies should quietly move back, after the Chief had passed them, to take post with rear companies. This would conceal the shortage. All went well till "Birdie" reached the last company when, seeing a young officer there he exclaimed, "Where have I met you before?" The young officer, taken aback, blurted out, "When I was with A Company Sir"!

He left two memorials of his term of office: a large structure to hold a battalion in the Khaibar Pass near Ali Masjid and an extra storey to the tower of the Staff College at Quetta. The latter was not very successful as it threw the building out of proportion and no one knew what it was for. Perhaps more than any other Commander-in-Chief he loved talking to the Indian soldier, the pensioner and the villager in their own language and had a rare knowledge of their needs and troubles. Indeed the welfare of the Indian soldier was always uppermost in his mind. Later, when at the India Office, I was to see a great deal of him and to benefit by his wise counsel.

"Birdie's" period of office coincided with that of Lord Irwin (later Halifax) as Viceroy. Lord Irwin was very religious, some-

what austere and unapproachable. If he had a sense of humour he very seldom showed it. Perhaps it was for this reason that he was not a very popular Viceroy, certainly not in business circles in Bombay and Calcutta, where it was openly said that his policies were ruining trade. It was also said, with some justification, that in the disturbed conditions of the time the Viceroy spent most of his time on his knees while the Commander-in-Chief toured the country-side exchanging anecdotes.

In 1928 General (later Field Marshal) Sir Philip Chetwode became "Birdie's" Chief of Staff and succeeded him as Commander-in-Chief in 1930. He was a fine soldier, a very able man and popular with all. During his term of office much argument was going on about the progress of "Indianization" of the Army and he sought genuinely to carry out the measures decided on. He had to contend with conservative opinion that progress should not be too rapid, and with Indian political views that it was not going fast enough. In holding the balance between these two opposing views he maintained that success depended on finding the required number of the right type of Indian cadets. His explanations of the problems involved made a great impression on Indian members of the Council of State who liked and respected him for his fairness and sincerity.

While on the question of "sincerity" I was once walking behind two Indian gentlemen about to attend a meeting of the Legislative Assembly in Simla. I had no intention of eavesdropping, but they were conversing very loudly and I could not fail to hear what they said. They were discussing a certain British Member of Council and one of them remarked, "*Affability bahut hai lekin true sympathy kuchh nahin*"! That could never be said of Philip Chetwode.

While he was C-in-C he paid a visit to Nepal at the time when the Rana family were in power, General Joodha Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana being Prime Minister. On ceremonial occasions the members of this family wore a special helmet, decorated with pearls and precious stones. As a signal mark of their appreciation they presented a similar helmet to Sir Philip who thus became the only person outside the Rana family entitled to wear "The Hat". I doubt if he ever had occasion to do so in public.

Following the Third Afghan War of 1919, affairs in Afghanistan



In some units a modification of the old Mogul system of the *Diwan-i-Amm*, or Public Audience and *Diwan-i-Khas*, or Special Meeting of those in authority was perpetuated. A "Regimental Durbar" was held at irregular intervals and attended by everyone in the unit not on duty, in Regimental *mufti*. The Commandant, flanked by the British and Indian Officers, presided and, in theory, anyone could make a suggestion or voice a complaint. In practice all such applications were "vetted" in advance by the Indian Officers, any serious complaints being dealt with elsewhere and only those admitted which concerned matters of amenities, dress and sport. There may have been criticisms that, in practice, the custom was futile, but particularly for young soldiers it was good that not only should justice be done but that it should be seen to be done and that those in authority were approachable. At intervals, also, the Commandant met all his officers together in the *Diwan-i-Khas* where special matters affecting the unit were discussed openly in private.

All this came to an end for me in September 1936, when I returned to Army Headquarters as Deputy Director of Operations and Intelligence on the General Staff. General Sir Robert Cassels had succeeded Sir Philip Chetwode in 1935 as Commander-in-Chief and General Sir William Bartholomew (1934-37) was Chief of the General Staff.

There is a popular idea that Military Intelligence is concerned with spies, secret agents, "cloak and dagger boys" and other villainous people with false names, false passports and false beards, existing in an atmosphere of clandestine and sinister intrigue. The "Director" is shown as an obscure figure, "wrapped in mystery and a sombrero". Some of my Indian friends used to send letters to me addressed to "The Military Intelligent General." All these ideas are erroneous, though some of the gentry mentioned have their uses in War and provide, later, a lucrative journalistic vehicle for their exploits. But Military Intelligence, with its many ramifications, is largely a matter of paper work and being able to understand and assess what the various reports received and sent out portend. Thus a Director is largely tied to a desk and a telephone, but he must be prepared to say what is likely to happen, anywhere at any time and is not allowed to make mistakes. On the other

hand, as he spins his webs, he comes into contact with more people outside the "military field" than any other General Staff Officer and is at the beck and call of everyone. At this time both Operations and Intelligence were linked in one Directorate. During World War II it was found necessary to separate them.

Among the many subjects dealt with under the heading of "Intelligence", education was not one of the least. It was not easy to emplant in the minds of politicians and the public that the Defence of India, while she remained a British Dominion, or Empire, could not be carried out from her own frontiers and coastline. Her bastions of defence lay in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf area, and Malaysia. This undoubted fact was not palatable to Indian opinion which, roughly, objected to her men and money being expended overseas on projects on which she was allowed, at that time, no say or responsibility. It was necessary to combat this view.

Then—and, no doubt, now—events taking place in lands beyond her periphery could affect her military needs both internally and externally. Such countries were Arabia, the Trucial Sheikdoms, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Soviet Russia, Chinese Sinkiang, Tibet, Southern China, Thailand, Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies. Further afield were Germany, Italy and Japan. Burma, although very important, came in a different category as far as the General Staff were concerned for, although India supplied troops and commanders to Burma and the Burma Office was under the same roof as the India Office in Whitehall, the Defence of Burma was a responsibility of the War Office. For many years liaison between India and Burma on defence plans hardly existed. There was a somewhat similar condominium as regards the Aden Protectorate.

From all these areas, reports gathered from various sources, came in and had to be sifted, digested, assessed, and the information supplied to those who needed it. A considerable staff was necessary to deal with these various areas as well as with the revision of maps and route books and similar routine matters. But the Director—who had to "stand in" on Operations when required—was responsible for the organisation and for the final assessment of any problem.

By 1936 the new city of Raisina had taken shape, though many of the bungalows to house officials and clerical personnel were still under construction and accommodation for the "small fry" was difficult to obtain. The old procedure of "Simla in the summer and Raisina in the winter" with all the upheaval involved was still in force. Viceroy's House, the two Secretariats and the Parliament building were ready for occupation. The great vista of Kingsway, stretching from Viceroy's House to the Indian War Memorial Arch and thence to the Irwin Amphitheatre and old Purana Kila was completed. It was a great conception in town planning, with its grassy flanks, ornamental waters and tree-shaded riding tracks. Bordering it the Palaces of Indian Princes, the residences of Members of Council and wealthy Indian gentlemen, set among delightful gardens, were taking shape.

There is a great contrast between Edwin Lutyen's Viceroy's House and Samuel Baker's Secretariat buildings, which flanked the final approach to the former. Viceroy's House has a rather heavy, brooding air, somewhat Egyptian in appearance. The great reception rooms on the first floor owe much of their interior decoration to Lady Willingdon. I was elsewhere during Lord Willingdon's Viceroyalty, but in 1936 the outward and visible signs of it were everywhere in "Willingdon this" and "Freeman-Thomas that". Perhaps the peak was reached when an enterprising Indian gentleman launched the "Willingdon Piggeries" with a blaze of advertising.

At the back of Viceroy's House were very attractive formal gardens, including a sunken garden and pool, a riot of flowers in spring. The Viceroy's study looked out on this garden through long windows. It was a long room panelled and lined with book cases, with the Viceroy's desk at the far end. It was quite a long walk to reach him from the door, which opened out of the Aide-de-Camps' room where visitors awaited an audience. In winter it was very warm. In summer it was air-conditioned in addition to fans and the sudden contrast between the heat outside and the inner chill gave a visitor the shivers.

The A.D.C.'s room had a door opening out onto the garden and a large sofa in the centre. Once in November 1938, when summoned to see the Viceroy (Lord Linlithgow) on some matter, I

found a stranger seated on the sofa. As I waited we talked and he asked me how I liked Viceroy's House. After some conversation about it I was about to remark that the corridors on the ground floor reminded me of the Bermondsey Public Baths. Fortunately, before I could make this comment, the "summons" came for me to see the "Lord". On my return, some time later, the stranger had gone and I asked the A.D.C. who he was. He replied that it was Sir Edwin Lutyens!

In 1937 three *Ghund Mishars* (Brigadiers) came from Kabul to attend some manoeuvres. As usual, they came first to Army Headquarters to be briefed and presented to the Commander-in-Chief. Later they asked me if they might see Viceroy's House and, as the Viceroy was then away at Belvedere in Calcutta, I obtained permission and took them round the Reception Rooms. They made little comment on these or on the gardens but before the visit ended asked if they might see "where the Viceroy kept his women". I had to explain that we could not see the private apartments and it was many years since Viceroys had maintained a *zanana*. It was obvious that their opinion of Viceroys slumped considerably!

The Secretariat Buildings were light and airy, the General Staff Offices, with the Commander-in-Chief, being round an open well on the first floor of the South building. The rooms were somewhat draughty in winter and, during World War II, when Government Departments were at Raisina all the year round they were distinctly hot, which was to be expected when no air-conditioning was available. My own office was above an entrance arch and overlooked the approach to Viceroy's House. On the great entrance arch of the companion building across the road I could see, each day, carved in letters of stone the words, "Liberty shall not descend unto a people; it is a privilege that must be earned before it can be enjoyed". It was a sobering thought for the day!

Below the rise in the roadway which led past the Secretariats to Viceroy's House, was a semi-circular space which might have been called "Dog's Delight" from the number of huge, ornate lamp posts which adorned it. Here stood the marble statues of a number of previous Viceroys. Anyone taking a very early morning ride on Kingsway might see a squad of road-clearers hosing

down these effigies while no one was about. The birds of the air are notoriously careless in their habits, but they seemed to have made a point of anointing these rulers of the past, whether as an act of reverence or contempt it is not possible to say. But the heads of defunct Viceroys undoubtedly made comfortable and sought after perches.

It was in the autumn of 1936 that serious trouble again started in Waziristan after a few years of comparative peace. There were several sources of Intelligence on tribal affairs from which the General Staff obtained information. Some of these were staffed jointly by Political and Military officers, others were purely Military while Police Intelligence was supplied by the Central Intelligence Bureau under Sir John Ewart. All these sources worked well and there was little of importance which was not known from day to day, or hour to hour. But when it came to deciding on any action to be taken on the reports, Military and Political opinions did not always coincide. Both in India—and in Whitehall—the slogan of Civil Departments of Government was, "Never do today what you can put off till tomorrow, because tomorrow it may not be necessary", in other words "let us wait and see". The General Staff's view of a serious situation was, "Never put-off till tomorrow what should be done today, for tomorrow it may be too late", in other words, "Nip trouble in the bud before it can assume unmanageable proportions". It often took a great deal of argument and telephoning before these two opposing views could be reconciled. Indeed the delays occasioned by consulting many different parties grew so serious that for a period in 1937, the General Officer Commanding Northern Command was placed in both Military and Political control of operations, overriding the Chief Commissioner of the North-west Frontier Province.

General Sir Kenneth ("Kitten") Wigram had been G.O.C Northern Command from 1934 to 1936, when he was succeeded by General Sir John Duke Coleridge. He was affectionately known in the army as "Daddy", but he also earned the sobriquet of "The Colossus of Roads". He believed that the construction of motorable roads on the Frontier and in tribal territory would not only facilitate the movement of armoured cars, tanks and lorried infantry in times of emergency but would lead to economic benefit

to the tribesmen who, he foresaw, would come to use their own cars and lorries in greater numbers in the future. One of his achievements was the construction of a network of roads on the Khajuri Plain, west of Peshawar City, which served to curb raiding gangs coming in from Afridi Tirah. Strangely enough he never learned to drive a car himself. He was a great friend of mine for many years and as I had to be in constant touch with him on Waziristan and Frontier policy, this friendship made our consultations much easier.

At the root of the trouble which began in 1936 was Haji Mirza Ali Khan, Imam of a small mosque at Ipi, a hamlet close to the road from Bannu to the Lower Tochi valley. Known as "The Faqir of Ipi", he was an Utmanzai Wazir of the same clan as Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the "Frontier Gandhi", with whom in later years he made common cause. Prior to 1936 he had lived a quiet religious life as an unknown Imam and through the previous troubles in Waziristan had shown no hostility to Government. In 1936, however, Chand Bibi, the wife of a small Hindu merchant of Bannu was abducted by a Wazir who subsequently, forcibly or otherwise, married her according to Muslim rites.

This gave rise to what has been called the "Islam Bibi" case, in which the Hindu husband sued in the Bannu court for restoration of conjugal rights. He won his case and the decision raised a storm of protest from tribal opinion in Waziristan. No doubt the whole affair was grossly exaggerated for, in normal circumstances, the matter could have been peacefully settled by the Political Officer with a Wazir *jirga*—abductions being by no means uncommon in Frontier Districts. The Faqir, however, took up the cudgels on religious grounds and, almost overnight, became the chief leader of a Wazir revolt against what was considered as unwarranted interference in tribal domestic life. It is of course possible that discontent with Government policy in Waziristan had been smouldering in his mind for some time and this was merely the spark to set it ablaze.

He first raised a Wazir *lashkar* in the Khaisora river valley, a few miles south of the Lower Tochi road, from where he could threaten communications with Razmak as well as the administered district round Bannu. The columns from Razmak and Bannu were

called out and additional troops sent to Bannu. There was fighting with casualties on both sides and by the end of 1936 the Wana Wazirs and Mahsuds of the Wana area of south Waziristan had become disaffected. Military and Political pressure failed to bring either the Faqir or the Wazir *jirgas* to heel and for the next six years the situation in Waziristan became a "running sore".

The Faqir organised his *lashkars* with great skill, raised a levy from the clans to maintain them and even contrived to manufacture some primitive cannon. It may here be noted that when a *lashkar* assembled in any area, each man brought with him food sufficient for, say, 10 days. As they had no "commisariat" for supply, when the food was consumed the *lashkar* had to disperse to obtain more, and might not reassemble for a considerable time. Thus, from a military point of view, it was necessary to try to bring the *lashkar* to battle within a limited time before it vanished into thin air. This, in view of the difficulties of terrain and the elusive tactics of the tribesmen was not always possible. During 1937, upwards of 30,000 troops were employed to deal with almost continual tribal gatherings in one part, or another of Waziristan.

One of the great difficulties of operations in Waziristan was the proximity of the Durand Line—the demarcated frontier with Afghanistan—which bounded the western side of the area. It was not easy to bring a *lashkar* to battle in, say, the Upper Tochi valley as when it got hard pressed it, with the Faqir, would slip across into Afghanistan where it could not be followed and where it was harboured by Afghan tribesmen. The Afghan Government could not, or would not, take any steps to prevent this. The situation was not unlike that which faced the French in Algeria in recent years, where rebels could slip across the frontiers into sympathetic territory in Tunisia and Morocco. In Waziristan—as in Algeria—when the troops retired the enemy would return. Apart from the friendly relations between the Afghan and the Wazir tribes and their religious ties it is more than likely that the Faqir may have received material as well as moral support from Afghanistan. But it is more probable that the material assistance came facilitate ~~the~~ Italian Missions at Kabul which were a legacy fantry in times of ~~en~~ European tours. The Afghan Government

itself was in no case to become involved in a religious dispute which had arisen outside its borders, and to which its eastern tribes were sympathetic. King Nadir Khan had been assassinated in 1933 and succeeded by his son King Zafir. The ruling power was in the hands of Nadir Khan's three brothers but their position was not too secure. It is noteworthy that in 1936 Mohammad Hashim Khan, the Prime Minister and most able of the three, had gone to Berlin for treatment for, it was alleged, cancer. Major decisions were not likely to be taken without his authority.

The use of Air action during these operations was also hedged about with difficulty and the General and Air Staffs "leant over backwards" to ensure that there was no harming of women and children when the Air arm was used, either for punitive bombing or directly against *lashkars*. The area of operations contained no large villages—with the possible exception of Datta Khel in the Upper Tochi valley—or clusters of villages which could be used as a target for bombing which might have decisive effect and bring about submission of the tribesmen. Tribal towers, houses and huts were built of mud and stones on which comparatively small bombs produced little effect. They could easily be rebuilt from the rubble. The only value in them was the wooden roof beams which were in short supply. There was practically nothing in any of the villages which could be set alight by incendiaries. Bombing was, however, of "nuisance value" as it disrupted the life of the area under attack.

The Durand Line, which shows up very clearly on a map, is by no means easy to recognise accurately either on the ground or from the air. The demarcation pillars are at wide intervals, usually on commanding points, and the Line itself is by no means straight but has salients and re-entrants. It was difficult for a pilot, attacking a target near the Line, to say which side of it he was on when making a "run in". It was equally difficult for an observer, not actually on the Line itself, to say whether an aircraft had crossed it or not—particularly for a tribesman who knew very little about it anyway—and from whom the reports of violation of air space came. Thus there were frequent complaints from Kabul which could not be verified and which had to be denied. It was in some ways fortunate that the aircraft then available were small and



slow. A modern jet-aircraft would have covered the whole area in a couple of minutes.

It is unfortunate that in war there are always a number of people who, though otherwise patriotic, seem to take sides with the enemy and by urging that they should not be unduly hurt seem to forget the dangers to their own troops. There are always others who will use any stick to beat the Government. Both these categories of people make the task of the military authorities more difficult. In order to satisfy all these people and ensure that there should be no harm to women and children in the Waziristan operations a set of "Rules" for Air action was devised which eliminated all possibility of surprise attack and seriously vitiated any Air action which was taken.

There was always some delay between the time Air action was called for by the men on the spot and permission was given to employ it. The Foreign and Political Department, the Commander-in-Chief and the Viceroy had all to be satisfied that it was necessary. Thereafter the Political Officer in the area to be attacked had to issue a 24 hours warning to the tribesmen and an aircraft flew over the area dropping leaflets giving the target to be bombed, the date and time of bombing and warning everyone to keep clear of the area. The tribesmen themselves had an excellent warning system by which observers on the hills shouted warnings when any aircraft was seen approaching and the sound of their voices travelled much faster than the aircraft. Long before a target was bombed, all women, children and animals had taken cover in the many large caves which abounded in the sides of river valleys. There was therefore no danger to anyone. Every time Air action of this type was taken, the whole procedure had to be gone through again. Later, arrangements were made to "proscribe" certain areas, after due warning, in which any movement observed could be attacked from the air.

In spite of these precautions there were continual questions to be answered both in the Assembly and in Parliament. One of the most troublesome was a "White Paper" produced by Mr. George Lansbury. It was annoying, not because the answers were quite clear, but because they took a long time to produce, which could have been expended to better employment.

much for immediate use, for he was in the unfortunate position of knowing things which he could not publish. On occasion he sent me drafts of his despatches to "vet" and at times I would suggest certain lines which he might be able to use.

In 1937 when things were bad in Waziristan the *Daily Mail* and the *Statesman* applied to send Press Correspondents to the theatre of Operations. No precedent could be found for this though I believe certain Correspondents accompanied some minor expeditions in the early years of the century. Rules for Correspondents had to be hastily prepared and a Press Officer appointed to deal with them. By the time all this had been prepared things had lulled and I doubt if any journalists availed themselves of the opportunity.

There was a certain amount of trouble from the local correspondents of some of the smaller vernacular newspapers in Frontier towns. Many reports sent in by these men, on many subjects, had been grossly exaggerated or based on unfounded rumours. Without censorship it was difficult to "catch up" on these. Again, many small vernacular papers with only local circulation and slender purses copied from the larger papers and the result was that their news items were distorted, or taken out of context with a definite intention to mis-represent. Thus it was found necessary to issue Press Communiques in English, Urdu and Hindi.

The sporadic disturbances in Waziristan continued as the years passed, during which the Faqir of Ipi was hunted by air and on the ground. He was very illusive and his special followers gave him plenty of warning when danger threatened. In later years he had a "hide out" in the remote valley of Gorwekht, near the source of the Tochi river and within a mile of the Afghan frontier. From there, when necessary, he could slip across the border to safety. All attempts to buy him off failed, though another fire-brand—the Shami Pir—accepted some Rs. 3 lakhs and was cheap at the price. The Faqir died in April 1960. For some time it was suspected that he received money from Soviet Russia. I can only hope he did not give as much trouble to the Pakistan Government as he did to me.

*The Years of Malaise—III*

ALTHOUGH THE situation in Waziristan dragged on as a permanent headache, affairs in India and in the international field were becoming increasingly difficult.

Lord Linlithgow succeeded Lord Willingdon as Viceroy in April 1936. He had already had much experience of Indian political affairs and, on arrival, was anxious to press on with constitutional reforms. In 1937 came Provincial Autonomy and the Separation of Burma from India. The difficulties of liaison with Burma over defence matters has already been mentioned and separation did not tend to make this any easier. The Government of Burma resented any attempts at "interference" from India, though the latter was, obviously, the only source of immediate assistance in an emergency.

In the elections which preceded the granting of Provincial Autonomy the Congress Party was successful in six Provinces and immediately began to make demands before accepting office. These were followed by opposition to the plan for a Federation, very dear to Lord Linlithgow's heart, in which Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League joined. These wrangles in the political field served to increase communal tension and to cause anxiety to those responsible for Internal Security and the Indian Army.

There had been certain changes in the personnel of the General Staff. General Bartholomew was succeeded as Chief of the General Staff, in September 1937, by General Sir Ivo Vesey, also a British Service Officer. During that year Major General (later Field Marshal, Sir,) Claude Auchinleck, then Director of Staff Duties, officiated as Deputy Chief of Staff. Mr. (later Sir) Charles Ogilvie became Secretary Army Department. Sir James Grigg was Finance Member of Council and, in 1938, Mr. (later Sir) Archibald Rowlands became Financial Advisor, Military Finance. All these played great parts in the years which followed.

From the tension arising from the demands and activities of the Congress Party and the Muslim League, the Communists, for perhaps the first time, began to take advantage of the disturbed political situation. Up to now they had been an almost negligible factor whose underground activities only required careful watching. But they now endeavoured to establish "cells" in the Indian Army and otherwise tamper with the loyalty of Indian soldiers. Their activities were not very far-reaching, but action had to be taken to warn all Indian units, and measures were devised to screen all recruits coming in. In addition, to guard against sabotage, security measures in Arsenals, Government munitions factories and other installations were tightened up. But other measures were also necessary to guard against disruptive elements thrown up as the result of political differences.

The General Staff published a weekly newspaper for the Indian Army called the *Fauji Akhbar*. In normal times this paper gave details of internal and external news of interest to the Indian soldier, details of Army appointments and so forth. It was, to a large extent, educational, being published in English, Roman-Urdu, Urdu and Gurmukhi; the English and Roman-Urdu, or vernacular scripts being printed in parallel columns so that it could be used in schools, classes and by those taking language examinations. It also provided something wholesome for the Indian soldier, who had little money for other literature, to read. The Director of Intelligence controlled policy, but normally the Editor was left alone. There were times, however, when special directions had to be given, or special articles written.

An example of this was when King Edward VIII abdicated in the autumn of 1936 and King George VI was proclaimed King-Emperor on December 14 that year. The reasons for the abdication puzzled the Indian soldier who, perhaps with memories of Mogul Emperors of Old and of Indian Princes and their "establishments", thought that a Monarch could marry whom he wished and as many times as he wished in addition to as many "fancy ladies" as caught his eye. If not, what was the good of being a Monarch? This had to be explained in an article in very simple language which all could understand. Later, another special article was necessary to make clear the transfer of loyalty to the new King.

The *Fauji Akhbar* was an organ through which the Indian soldier could be reached and thus, in 1937 and later, special articles appeared explaining various aspects of the Indian political scene in very simple terms as well as giving warnings of Communist aims and beliefs. Strangely enough these articles attracted no attention outside Army circles and their expected denouncement as "propaganda" did not eventuate. For some years "propaganda" had been a dirty word, chiefly when applied to some political belief or ideology with which other people did not agree. The word only means, "to propagate a theory, practice or ideology", and anyone who preaches a sermon, makes a speech, writes an article or frames an advertisement is employing propaganda for one purpose or another. Similarly, those who disagree with whatever may have been put forward and express contrary views through some medium are employing "counter-propaganda"—another dirty word. Perhaps the special articles in the *Fauji Akhbar* may have come under the category of "counter-propaganda", but they were careful to be purely explanatory and devoid of bias. Later, as will be seen, All India Radio became a powerful weapon for counter-propaganda during World War II.

During 1937, Japan had been making inroads from Manchuria into North China. Roughly, their aim was to eliminate Chiang-kai-Shek with whose regime they did not agree, though undoubtedly there were other factors involved. During the autumn they moved south to Hankow, Shanghai, Nanking and Canton, and Chiang's Government finally withdrew to Chungking. These developments constituted a threat to the British colony of Hongkong and, as a result, Indian troops had to be sent to reinforce the garrison there. This, immediately, raised a storm of political resentment in India. There was, however, a certain lack of knowledge among the Indian public as to what the Japanese were trying to do and why, though at that time the modern popular cry of "aggression" had not come into general use and China was a somewhat unknown entity and a far cry from India. All India Radio was at that time short of informed commentators on Far Eastern Affairs, and I was asked if I would give a series of short broadcasts under the title of "The Dragon and the Rising Sun". There was no real precedent for this and the Viceroy's permission had to be

obtained. Finally I was allowed to give the series under the name of "Petre Noble", and under the same name gave a further series, later, on "Current Affairs in the Americas". None of these talks was propaganda, but merely an objective commentary on issues involved—or possibly on involved issues! There is a certain technique required in broadcasting and the experience I gained was, later, to prove of great value.

During 1937-38 many interesting visitors came to India, both privately and officially and such personalities are always of interest to a Director of Intelligence. Colonel Lindbergh and his wife came through Delhi on a visit to the Far East. He was tall and slight and very quiet, while his wife was obviously going to provide an addition to his family. (I do not remember whether this was before or after the kidnapping of his son). Major van Kesteren came from the Dutch East Indies to discuss certain matters, and laid the foundation for a closer liaison in the future, as will be seen. John Gunther and his wife came in connection with the preparation of the Indian portion of his projected book *Inside Asia*. Mrs. Gunther—of that time—was a tiny, vivacious person who came to a cocktail party equipped with a notebook and a pencil and made copious notes. One was left wondering whether they were favourable or critical. Arrangements were made to let them visit the Khaibar Pass during their very short stay. How John Gunther was able to sum up the "Indian proposition" in so short a time I have never been able to understand! Another interesting visitor was Marshal Baron Mannerheim of Finland, who stayed a few days in Delhi on his way to shoot big game in Nepal. His comments on affairs in his country *vis-a-vis* Soviet Russia were very illuminating.

During 1937 three Germans came to India and their visits were not without interest in view of subsequent events. Baron von Plessen came through Simla on his way, ostensibly, to Sinkiang. He was German Consul General in Ceylon, had been educated at Cambridge University and spoke excellent English. He had none of the aggressiveness of a Prussian, was a man of the world and did not appear very favourable to Nazism. Socially he was a charming person to meet. He was given certain details about the route through Kashmir to Leh and introductions to the Motamin

Durbar to facilitate transport arrangements etc. No more was heard of him after he reached Leh and it was doubtful if he really had some mission in Sinkiang, or was a bona fide traveller, or was "escaping" from a situation which he saw was inevitable.

Two other Germans came together. Both were definitely Nazis. H. G. von Studnitz was a journalist representing the *Volkische Beobachter* and *Lokal Anzeiger* and, after his return to Germany, certainly provided articles on his Indian trip to the former. His companion was Herr Strunk, a Captain in the SS., a rather uncouth and unpleasant person who had, at least, one contact in Simla. Strunk may have come to keep an eye on von Studnitz. He left India before the latter and after his return to Germany it was reported that "he had been killed in a duel". After his departure von Studnitz began to style himself "Baron". He applied to be allowed to visit the Khaibar and Bolan Passes but was fobbed off with a conducted visit to Razmak, in Waziristan, where he presented a picture to the Headquarter Mess. He also went to see Sir Sikander Hayat Khan, Premier of the Punjab, who gave an amusing account of the questions he asked. The real object of this visit never transpired. Neither German seemed to take any interest in Indian politics and, in view of what was to follow later, it may have been that they were only interested in the military situation on the Western Frontier. If so they did not collect much information.

Between the two World Wars the Japanese provided a "Resident Officer" for liaison with Army Headquarters. He was "looked after" by the Intelligence Directorate, who were responsible for arranging his "tours", feeding him with items of information on request and entertaining him at intervals. I had already had considerable experience of Japanese aims and activities when serving with the Legation Guard in Peking and had no illusions at all regarding either their mentality, habits or methods of work. As early as 1921, I had come in contact with the Resident Officer at that time, since we were both living in the same "block" at the Cecil Hotel in Old Delhi. I had then no secret papers, but I had a number of confidential documents in my room, which I was studying for the Staff College examination. I soon found that my Japanese friend would go to my room while I was away at office,

and had to order my Bearer to keep it locked. Later, when a student at the Staff College Quetta, my friend came for a short visit, and I had to suggest to the Commandant that all bachelor students should keep their rooms locked while he was there.

In 1936, Colonel Kuroda was Resident Officer and when he left in January 1937, he was entertained at a Farewell Dinner at which the Consul General Mr. Yonezawa and his assistant Mr. Kaikotsubo were guests. He was succeeded by Major Teshima. These Japanese Officers seldom asked for much information on military matters, but a certain watch was kept on their movements when they left Delhi or Simla. All Military Attaches, wherever located, are centres for collection of various types of information which can be obtained without breaking diplomatic rules. But it was known that the Japanese Resident Officer provided a centre for Japanese Intelligence throughout India and that every Japanese business-man in the country had an appropriate number and rank in the Intelligence service. Their reports came in through regular channels and a knowledge of these channels became very necessary after the entry of Japan into World War II on the Axis side.

In 1938, war clouds began to gather over Europe and the internal political situation worsened. Matters flared up again in Waziristan and air action had to be taken against the Madda Khel—and Ipi—at the head of the Tochi valley. The possibility of disarming the tribes—a somewhat forlorn hope—was considered, as also the raising of a Mahsud Labour Battalion to provide employment in South Waziristan. In February the Congress controlled the Provincial Governments of the United Provinces and Bihar and demanded the release of all political detainees. When the Viceroy refused, the Ministers resigned. The plan for an All-India Federation received another setback when Mr. Jinnah, who already had declared his opposition to it, produced his plan for "two nations" and the creation of Pakistan. These trends in the political field aggravated communal tension and increased the danger of communal clashes.

It was sometime much later that I met Mr. Jinnah at a social gathering. I asked him about his "two nation" plan, remarking that if the area he proposed for Pakistan was divorced from the



rest of India, it seemed to me that, with its scanty economic resources, it would go bankrupt within a very short period. Mr. Jinnah was fully aware of the implications but replied, "if I do not insist on this and India as a whole attains independence, Islam will disappear within a very short time and with scenes of great bloodshed."

The European skies had been dark for some time. Hitler had become Chancellor of Germany in 1933. In 1934 he carried out his first "putsch" in Austria, much of which came under his control. In 1936 he introduced conscription, his aim being an army of 500,000 men with which to regain what Germany had lost by the Treaty of Versailles. Italy, under the Fascist rule of Mussolini, had declared war on Abyssinia in 1935 and established herself on the Red Sea which up to then had been, practically, a British lake. The Berlin-Rome axis continued with aggressive tactics and periodical crises to provoke a war of nerves in Europe. All these portents were watched with anxiety in India. In 1938 the Viceroy (Linlithgow) went to England on leave and Lord Brabourne, Governor of Bengal, came from Calcutta to officiate for him. Brabourne was a very able and likable man, very approachable and one who never stood on his dignity. In July of that year, in Simla, at about 6.30 p.m., I received a telephone message that he wanted to see me at once. Hastily recounting my various misdeeds I obtained a rickshaw and went to Viceregal Lodge. On arrival the A.D.C. told me that Lord Brabourne was in his bath, but that I was to go straight up. I was ushered into the Viceregal bathroom where Lord Brabourne was still covered in soap and splashing about. We talked for some time while he got out and towelled himself and I got rather wet. This was the only time I was ever received by a Viceroy when wearing his birthday suit!

In September the Munich Agreement was signed by Germany, France, Italy and Britain. This was designed to counter Hitler's plans to overrun Czecho-Slovakia and reclaim the Sudeten-land. Prior to this, in view of the dangerous European situation, arrangements had begun, in March, for an "Expert Examination" covering the whole field of the Defence of India. This affected every Department of the Government of India. When Lord Linlithgow returned in September after talks with the authorities in Whitehall,

he had already decided on urgent measures to this end. The Indian Press was, at that time, strongly condemning the growth of power Politics in Europe. There were few thinking people who did not realise that the threat of war was growing and that an explosion might take place at any time.

This "Expert Examination", later termed "Critical Examination", entailed a vast amount of high pressure work including such matters as the preparation of the War Book—which told Central and Provincial Government departments what action to take in the event of War—Censorship, Control of Broadcasting, preparation of draft Ordinances, Frontier Policy and the modernisation of Cavalry, Artillery, Infantry, Signals, the Air arm and the Indian Navy. Finance was closely involved and India was fortunate enough to have such able and sympathetic men as Sir James Grigg and Archibald Rowlands to advise. On the General Staff side, Major General Auchinleck was the leading spirit, and when a Committee under Lord Chatfield came to India to examine the proposals, he was appointed a Member.

Here something must be said about General Sir Robert Cassells, the *Commander-in-Chief*. As I worked very closely with him until his retirement in 1942 I am perhaps prejudiced for I came to know him very well as a personal friend. He was a very fine cavalry leader, as his actions when in command of the 11th Indian Cavalry Brigade in Mesopotamia in 1918 show. He was also in his element as G.O.C. Northern Command from 1930-1935. But, perhaps, he was not so happily placed as *Commander-in-Chief*, with his position as *Defence Member of Council* and all the multifarious problems which beset him during his tenure of office. When war came in 1939, his position was analogous to that of General Sir O'Moore Creagh in 1914.

In his official duties he was inclined to be bluff, outspoken and irascible. He had a quick temper which he did not conceal. For this reason many people did not like him. I have many records of "Chief in a bad mood today. Kept out of the way." Those who knew him best took little notice of the rough side of his tongue. He was not good "on paper" or in the compilation of the many notes and memoranda which had to be prepared on many subjects. Nor was he very good at "sticking to his brief" at Council

and other important meetings. He kept a Roger's Thesaurus on his desk and would dip into it frequently. He would seldom leave a carefully prepared draft alone and I spent many weary hours sitting beside him in his office or house, going through drafts word by word and trying to ensure that his numerous alterations did not vitiate the sense of the document. He was very fond of the word "however" which he would scatter-broadcast over a memorandum. Sometimes, when thoroughly exasperated, it was on the tip of my tongue to suggest "peradventure" as an alternative, but I forbore. He was very kindly and very loyal to those who served him. Physically, he was tall, lean and wiry, very active and continued to play polo up to his retirement. He was never so happy as when he was with horses. He fully realised that the days of his horsed-cavalry were over, although he deplored it.

The Chatfield Committee started work in November 1938 and the C-in-C had to give evidence on two or three occasions on matters of policy. For each of these a memorandum was prepared in advance with his approval to assist him in stating his case. The C.G.S.—Sir Ivo Vesey—and I accompanied him in case he should wish to consult us over any questions the Committee might ask. All went well until a particular matter of high policy came up. Whether General Cassells took the wrong memorandum with him, or was in a bad mood that day, or was irritated by some question from the Committee no one knew. But he made a terrible mess of his evidence. Sir Ivo Vesey, Major General Auchinleck and I were aghast at what he said. We could not openly contradict him but the matter could not be allowed to rest on the record. We had to ask for a private meeting of the Committee to put things right. I do not think General Cassells ever knew what we had to do.

The report of the Chatfield Committee, when issued, was extremely satisfactory from the point of view of the General Staff and the Financial authorities, and as a result a "Modernization Committee" was set up to go into details. But affairs in the outside world were moving fast and it is doubtful if much practical progress was made before the world was again at war.

In spite of the Munich Agreement in March 1939 Hitler marched into Czecho-Slovakia and declared a "Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia". After a German ultimatum Lithuania ceded the

Memel-land to Germany. Mussolini invaded Albania. Britain and France, now thoroughly alarmed, announced guarantees to Poland. All this was very disturbing and other countries, further East, were also alarmed. For some time there had been indications that the Berlin-Rome axis might be extended to Tokyo and, since Japan was now firmly established in China, this spelt dangers for countries bordering the western Pacific Ocean and for Australia and New Zealand. A task now came my way which is worth recording in some detail for it was closely connected with subsequent developments.

The military command in the Netherlands East Indies indicated that they would like to discuss certain mutual defence matters which might arise in an emergency and it was arranged that I should go to see them in Java and talk things over. They insisted that the visit should be *incognito*—so I travelled in mufti with a special passport. As the matter was urgent I went by K.L.M. This Dutch airline was then flying D.C. 3s on their Far-eastern route, the pilots being men from their Naval air arm and then, and later, I came to know Captains Hondong and Te Pass well. They and their air crews were extremely efficient.

On joining "Pelikaan" at Allahabad I was much embarrassed to find Mr. Birchell, Foreign Correspondent of the *New York Times* was a fellow passenger for part of the way. He had been to see me several times while in New Delhi and, naturally, wanted to know where I was going. I had to dissemble. The route led through Rangoon and Bangkok—where a squadron of the U.S. Pacific fleet was anchored outside on a "Goodwill visit"—to Singapore where I stopped off for 2 days. General Dobbie was then commanding, a very religious man and a tectotaller. I was taken round the defences of Singapore Island and saw the two 15 inch naval guns which, with all their connected equipment, had been installed on land at a cost of some £750,000. After due warning to the populace one had been fired for practice. It was proposed to fire another round but fortunately the officer in charge looked into the piece ~~before~~ reloading and saw that the vacuum caused by the discharge ~~had~~ sucked some two hundredweight of road metal into the barrel. (Battleships do not carry road metal on deck and this small matter had been overlooked). The firing of

the single round broke a number of windows in the town and caused even more miscarriages among the Chinese and Malays. When the Japanese attacked in 1942 I doubt if either gun was fired.

My first impressions—which I had no cause to alter later—were that too much attention was being paid to the defences of Singapore Island at the expense of the larger problem of the defence of the peninsula as a whole. The route southwards from Bangkok, taken by commercial aircraft, along the shores of the Gulf of Siam to Penang Island, showed very clearly how road and railway in the north of the Malay Peninsula ran side by side past such airfields as Alor Star and Butterworth. It would give an easy run in to an enemy who would take the risk of violating Thai territory by landing troops and aircraft at Songkla on the southern tip of Thailand. Indeed, when the problem of attacking Singapore had been examined at the Imperial Defence College, London, in 1935, there was a considerable body of opinion that this project would provide better results than a direct attack on Singapore itself.

On the way to Singapore the aircraft had stopped at Medan in Sumatra to refuel. Here was a large colony of Sikhs employed in the tobacco plantations. The injunction of Guru Gobind Singh, "Tambaku chhoro", evidently did not apply to harvesting the leaf. Perhaps the Guru meant "Tamaku"?

After stops at the small airstrip at Palembang (Sumatra) and Batavia I was deposited at Bandoeng (Java), met by Captain Weigerman who later became Military Attache at Washington and whisked away in a car without any of the usual formalities. It became very obvious that the military command did not wish my arrival to be known, particularly to the Civil Administration at Buitenzorg, half way to Batavia. On reaching the Preanger Hotel I was "taken over" by Captain van Vreden, detailed as my A.D.C. during my stay in Java. Later, when the Japanese overran the Island, van Vreden who had been injured, was placed in an aircraft and ultimately reached New Delhi, where he came to stay with me for a short time. His wife and children were left behind, but I believe survived the Japanese occupation. Later I was to meet General Boestra, Commander-in-Chief, General Berens-

chott, Chief of Staff, Colonel Statius Muller, Chief Engineer and Colonel van Oijen, A.D.C. to Queen Wilhelmina, commanding the Air Force.

I stayed 3 days in Bandoeng, being shown military and airforce installations, ammunition factories and troops on field exercises. The military establishment was not very large, since the troops were, at that time, only required for limited tasks within the Netherlands East Indies. The infantry was organised in composite battalions—part Dutch, part Javanese. The barracks were well built and very clean, some blocks being for European troops, some for Javanese. Similarly there was ample provision for married quarters, and the Dutch and Javanese lived amicably side by side. There were excellent modern cookhouses, with large pressure cauldrons and other modern equipment where the same meals were served each day to both Dutch and Javanese. The system was very different from that in India.

I was not greatly impressed with the tactical exercises I was taken to see. The senior officers were Dutch, but there were Javanese commissioned officers up to the rank of Major. The Staff Officers I talked to evidently did not think much of the Javanese officers as responsible leaders, nor of the Javanese as very reliable troops unless supported by Dutch. It was very noticeable how the Dutch disliked and despised the Eurasians, of whom there were a great many in Bandoeng. Indeed, General Berenschott the Chief of Staff, who was later killed in an accident, was unpopular as it was suspected that he was not of pure European ancestry. He was, however, a very able man and was reputed to work 16 hours a day.

The Airforce, which was under command of the Army, consisted mainly of twin-engined Glenn-Martin fighter-bombers. One morning I was taken in one of them over to Dutch Borneo for coffee and brought back to Bandoeng for lunch. They were very handy aircraft and, as speed went in those days, fast.

It was obvious that, on matters of defence policy, the Army and Navy did not see eye to eye, while the civil administration kept a very tight hand on defence expenditure. Both, Army and Navy had no doubts that the external enemy would be Japan. But while the Army had already prepared a number of secret landing strips

in Dutch Borneo and the Celebes and based defence on attacking a sea-borne invasion with aircraft in the narrow channels between the Islands, the Admiral (Hemmerich) based his strategy on battleships, which he had not got.

On my last day in Bandoeng, General Boestra took me alone in his car, with only a Javanese driver. We, of course, had had several talks previously, in which he had given me lists of the equipment he urgently required and which he hoped India would supply. Alas, as I studied it, I saw that most of the items were those we wanted for our "modernization" in India and that all of them were in short supply. General Boestra did not speak much English and I spoke no Dutch, but on this occasion as we drove for some two hours through the cassava and chinchona plantations of the Bandoeng plateau, it seemed to me that he was glad to have someone from outside—who would not talk—to whom he could put forward a justification of his defence policy and an account of all the wrangles he had with the Governor General and the Admiral. The burden of his theme, often repeated, was "Give me the guilders and I will buy my bombers". Once again it was the old policy of "butter before guns" for a dependency which had urgent needs for development and to whom the threat of invasion seemed very far away.

Much has been said, in recent years, about the evils of colonialism and the striving of peoples for nationalism and independence, with which the term Freedom is linked. I was only able to see a small part of Java, an island in the tropics. Bandoeng, on a plateau 6,000 feet above sea-level, some 30 miles in length by 15 miles breadth, surrounded by volcanoes up to 11,000 feet, has an equable temperature, although within 50 miles of the equator. Vegetation is lush and there is little dust. Pith helmets are unknown and only felt hats are worn. The Plateau—and other parts of Java I saw—was admirably served by broad tarmaced roads. The villages I went into were very clean and well served with a potable water supply and adequate arrangements for sanitation and hygiene. The houses were well built, and each large village had a school and a dispensary. Many Javanese are Muslims and their Mosques showed Far-eastern influences in their architecture. The people were well dressed, cheerful and industrious and I was told that

there was very little real poverty. A number of merchants and shopkeepers were Chinese, disliked by the Javanese on the grounds that they were usurers. Very few Japanese were in evidence. As a whole, it seemed to me that Dutch rule was easy and benevolent, that their development of the islands was of a very high standard and that their educational system was resulting in many more Javanese being integrated into posts in the civil government.

I went down to Batavia by train and was met by Herr Lovink, in charge of East Asian affairs and intelligence. Like most great Far-eastern ports—such as Tientsin, Shanghai and Hongkong—Batavia, Cheribon and Surabaya in Java were ultra-modern in their buildings and amenities. They needed to be, for the climate of the tropical sea coast was steamy and enervating. Herr Lovink had, at one time, been an employee of the British-American Tobacco Company in China, so there was a mutual link of interest between us. His knowledge of Far-eastern affairs was prodigious and he had no illusions as to the ultimate intentions of Japan, whose people he disliked. He showed me a map on which every Japanese in the islands was pin-pointed and claimed that when the emergency arose he would have every one under lock and key within eight hours. We talked in his office until 3.0 a.m. the next morning discussing the chain of Japanese Intelligence which ran from the Netherlands East Indies, through Malaya, Thailand and Burma to India. Herr Lovink escaped when Japan overran the Islands and came to Delhi where he visited me. Later, when the war was over, he went as Netherlands, ambassador to Tokyo. He was a very able man.

When I returned to New Delhi the international situation was no better. In the Army, officers are divided into two categories—those who never go on leave and those who take leave on the slightest provocation. When the former apply for leave they are met with the comment, "But you never go on leave?" The latter seldom have to apply, for someone will say, "You haven't been on leave lately. When are you going?" As I belonged to the latter category I decided that it was best to take leave to England while the going was still good and before some catastrophe occurred. Accordingly I went down to Bombay and sailed on s.s. Strathaird with four months leisure before me. I felt I had earned it.



BOOK III

*Curfew*

“A signal to put out fires . . . by the ringing of  
a bell at a fixed evening hour.”

*Marlbrouck s'en va en guerre*

WHILE I was in England the summer of 1939 was progressively gloomy as regards the international climate. In April, Hitler encouraged by success, had announced the abrogation of the Naval Agreement of 1934 regarding ship construction and also the Non-aggression Pact with Poland. He demanded Danzig and a road through the Polish Corridor. The British reply was a Bill to introduce compulsory Military Training, the date for call-up being July 1st.

In August a joint Anglo-French Military Mission to Russia started talks in Moscow but, fortunately, had not proceeded very far when the signing of a Soviet-German Non-aggression Pact was made public. On August 25 an Anglo-Polish Alliance was signed. It looked as though a rupture could not be long delayed.

Wednesday, August 23rd, was a lovely, warm summer's day and, in the afternoon I lazed in a deck chair in the garden. There was not a cloud in the sky and through a gap in the South Downs I could see a broad arc of the blue water of the Channel, calm without a ripple. A solitary tramp steamer chugged slowly westwards, the smoke from her funnel standing up in a straight column above her. The telephone rang and, muttering maledictions on the accursed instrument, I went into the house to answer it. It was someone from the India Office being so cryptic that I could hardly make out what he was driving at. It became clear, however, that I was to return to India on the next day or so. Possibly by air—he had no details yet but would phone again.

It came as no surprise to me. I had wondered for some time when the summons would come. I had taken the precaution of inserting an "escape clause" in the lease of my rented and furnished house to cover such a possibility. It was now only a matter of settling up my affairs and waiting for further orders before packing up my traps.

Next evening there was another telephone call. I was to be at

Victoria Station, platform 12, at 8.0 p.m. the next day—Friday, August 25th. Dress-mufti. Only the minimum of hand baggage and a small suitcase. No need for passport, tickets or money. Only a small select party of individuals would be returning to the Middle East and India—probably on a destroyer. That was all. That evening I recorded, "It looks very like war."

I got to Victoria Station next day at the appointed time. It was blacked out and only a few "blued" lamps lit. There were no porters. I found a barrow on which I parked my hand baggage and suitcase. Later I found that it had a broken wheel and was immobile. There were very few people or officials about. I caught a ticket-collector who thought a special train was due to leave platform 16, but it had not arrived yet and he did not know anything. I sat on my suitcase and, like Mr. Micawber, waited for something to turn up.

About 9.0 p.m. the Concourse began to fill with people and it soon became evident that they were service officers, with female relatives, all very angry. They had arrived at Tilbury at midday that morning to go on leave and had at once been told to proceed to Victoria Station preparatory to returning to their stations in the Middle East and Africa. They had only hand baggage with them and such mufti as they stood up in. One officer had only a bag of golf-clubs and a claymore! A very young Pilot Officer, clad only in a white shirt and a pair of grey flannel trousers had found time to get married during the afternoon and, in the hurly-burly of events, had come away with nothing but his bride's handbag! (Of him more later).

Into this pandemonium came the Minister of Defence, beautifully dressed in Homburg hat, short black coat, striped trousers and tightly rolled umbrella, with a beaming smile on his face. Perhaps he hoped to make a short speech of encouragement to the warriors about to return for the defence of the Empire. He evidently had never been confronted by such a large number of very angry officers with a considerable knowledge of basic English. He soon found out what they thought about him and the beatific smile left his face. He went away quickly. If he had stayed any longer he would have left without his lovely striped trousers. It is hoped he learned something about organisation.

The special train finally arrived at platform 17. It was made up of very ancient Third-class coaching stock. An ugly rush started to get seats and three ticket-collectors at the barrier were swept away in the flood. I managed, with difficulty, to get a seat in a carriage with 9 others, but there were many unfortunates standing in the corridors. We left about 9.30 p.m., in unlit carriages, for an unknown destination.

At midnight we were ejected at Newhaven Dock—10 miles from where I had started that afternoon! It was pitch dark, no lights and a thick fog. We were directed to s.s. Brighton, on the Dieppe service. It was a miracle that no one fell into the dock in the darkness. Perhaps someone did and was not noticed, for no one knew who was who or how many had boarded the train! We had to wait for a second special train with 600 Naval Reservists and then there was more chaos on the darkened ship. I was lucky to get a seat at a table in a saloon and a cup of coffee and a sandwich. I spent the night sitting there in a ship jammed tight with people. We reached Dieppe at 6.30 a.m. next day and got ashore through alley-ways knee-deep in empty beer bottles. There we found three special trains waiting for us and at about 8.0 a.m. left for an unknown destination in France.

Everyone was very hungry but it was not until we reached the vicinity of Paris that restaurant cars were put on and even then it was mid-afternoon before we could get something to eat. A British Railway Transport Officer turned up but he could do little except try to get someone to compile a list of those who were in the trains. To my horror I found I was the senior military officer but fortunately discovered Lieut-Colonel I. G. Chrystall, 13/18 Hussars, who was returning to command the Trans-Jordan Frontier Force. He became my Staff Officer. With some difficulty we obtained about 380 names of Army and R.A.F. officers and N.C.Os, Cable and Wireless personnel for censorship duties and 40 very senior diplomats and civil government officials.

During that night as we travelled southwards through France all railway stations were blacked out, but by the eerie light of "blued" lamps we could see long columns of school children being evacuated. Rumours passed up and down the train; we were going to Toulon to board a French battleship; a P & O liner had been

diverted to take us; the Transport Somersetshire was waiting for us at Marseilles. They were all wrong. At 6.0 a.m. next morning as we drew slowly alongside Mole G at Marseilles there was H. M. S. Shropshire, spick and span in the sunlight. We, on the other hand, were extremely travel-soiled and dishevelled.

Shropshire had only just arrived and the gangways were not down. Arrangements had to be made at once, and so a small platform was lowered on a derrick and, with Captain Lydekker in charge of the Naval party and Chrystall we were hoisted on deck like a bunch of bananas. To my delight and astonishment I was greeted by Captain Bisset R.N., with whom I had worked for a year at the Imperial Defence College. It made matters very much easier! By the time the gangways were down and the parties began to come aboard we had got things sorted out. The Naval Reservists vanished into their own part of the ship. Junior officers below the rank of Colonel were parked on deck and found it very hard lying. Captain Bisset and his officers evacuated their quarters and the Ward Room aft and went to their battle stations. The 40 senior officials were allotted sleeping space in the accommodation vacated. Shropshire was one of the County Class cruisers designed to take troops, or refugees, on her decks in an emergency, but the designers never catered for a large number of V.I.Ps who had to be squeezed tight into a limited space.

We had just taken a breather after dealing with these problems when one of the ship's officers came to me with a broad grin on his face: "Captain's compliments, Sir, and the Diplomats aft are in a state of mutiny. Will you please deal with them urgently!" I found them grouching about the "disgraceful accommodation" and being allotted three to a cabin meant for only one or two. In explaining that we were sailing under war conditions and that Shropshire was not an Ocean Liner I am afraid I was very short with them. I could arrange for any friends, who wished to, to share a cabin but that was all and they must make the best of it—or else! There was no more trouble.

These senior officials were a remarkable collection, all summoned back to key posts. They included Sir Reader Bullard (H.M. Minister at Jeddah), Sir Frank Watson, Sir Kevin Boyd, Mr. Smart (Oriental Secretary, Egypt), Mr. Hammersley (Gover-

nor of Sinai), Mr. Heathcote-Smith (Consul General, Alexandria), Mr. Were (Consul, Alexandria), Major General Macready (Military Mission), Major General Spinks Pasha (retired) and two or three French consular officials.

Fortunately the weather during the 4 days voyage to Alexandria—with a 12 hour stop at Malta—was mainly warm and dry. At Malta the deck passengers were allowed ashore and bought up every Lilo and mattress they could lay hands on. I, myself, shared a tiny cabin with Spinks Pasha to whom I gave the bunk (age before honesty) while I borrowed a palliase from the Captain's Coxswain (a most admirable man) and slept on the floor. Every night we were battened down without lights and with paravanes out and by day had to dodge gun practice and other naval manoeuvres. The Royal Marines turned to with a will and fed the deck party—15 sittings to each meal! It was necessary to queue up for everything. After Malta we were joined by H. M. S. Devonshire, wearing the Flag of the C-in-C, Admiral Cunningham. Everyone was glad when we reached Alexandria.

By this time I had collected two officers returning to India. We decided to hang together and see what onward arrangements we could make. At Alexandria there was a special train to take us to Cairo and, on arrival there, I went off to Head Quarters British Troops in Egypt, to see General (later Field Marshal, Lord) "Jumbo" Wilson, commanding. The situation was grim—even grimmer than appeared in Press reports. The Suez Canal was closed to commercial shipping and no passenger ships were moving in either the Red Sea, or Mediterranean. He surmised I should be in Egypt for quite a time and offered me a job, which I declined with thanks.

With no uniform, only the clothes I stood up in, very little money and no visible means of support, in a land where no one bothered about what happened to India, I wandered disconsolately along the corridors of H.Q. Suddenly my eye caught the name of Group Captain Wigglesworth, R.A.F. on a door. At last I had found a friend who might be useful. I went in and poured out my tale of woe. Any hope of an aircraft going eastwards which could take three abandoned musqueteers? Within half an hour I had wangled the possibility of three seats in a Vickers Valentia leav-

ing next day for Habanniya. Beyond that I should have to try again, but it was good enough.

General Wilson had told me that an Infantry Brigade has just reached Egypt from India. There was time to see it and, in the afternoon, I begged a staff car and drove out 90 miles across the desert to El Fayid on the Bitter Lakes. It was very hot and I found them pitching camp in deep sand among tamarisk scrub near Genefa on the shore of Lake Timsah. It did not seem a very desirable spot but Brigadier Macpherson and the Indian Officers I spoke to told me that they were all in good heart. I could do nothing for them except to see that their liaison with Headquarters in Cairo was working satisfactorily.

Next morning, September 2nd, we were at Heliopolis airfield at 6.0 a.m. and packed into a Vickers Valentia with a number of R.A.F. technicians. The aircraft was much overloaded and the canvas seats which let down from the sides of the fuselage were very uncomfortable. I found that the Pilot was the young officer I had seen with his bride's handbag at Victoria Station! He still had nothing but his shirt (no longer white) and flannel trousers. I was somewhat disturbed to hear he had never flown a Valentia before! We stopped at Ramleh in Palestine to refuel and then had difficulty in gaining sufficient height to cross the Jordan Hills. We finally got across about half a mile north of Jerusalem with, perhaps, 100 feet to spare!

We stopped again at K. 2 and Rutbah in the desert. The Flying Training School at Heliopolis had been evacuated to Habanniya and the students had been told to fly the aircraft. There had been several crashes and casualties had to be buried both at K.2 and Rutbah. We reached Habanniya at about 7.0 p.m. (Air Vice-Marshal Tyson commanding) and were put up in the R.A.F. Guest Rooms. That evening there was news that Hitler had invaded Poland and bombed Warsaw.

Our Valentia had to return to Cairo, so our onward journey was held up. There was, however, a possibility that an "Indian" Valentia might come along in a day or two. It was at 1.15 p.m., Sunday September 3rd, that we heard Neville Chamberlain announcing on the radio that we were at war with Germany. Later King George broadcast a message to the Empire. It was an oppor-

tunity for useful talks with A. V. M. Tyson and Group Captain Maund.

Next day I got the loan of a car and went into Baghdad to see our Ambassador, Sir Basil Newton. On the way, at the bridge over the Euphrates river, a car stood by the roadside and a man and a small boy were walking and taking the cool morning air. We stopped and found it was the Regent of Iraq with the small King—quite unattended—and chatted to them for a few minutes. The Counsellor at the Embassy was Mr. (later Sir) Houston-Boswall, who had been a fellow student at the Imperial Defence College (curious how friends turned up everywhere!) and I lunched with him to meet Brigadier Waterhouse, Inspector General of the Iraq Army. Things were difficult in Baghdad for the Iraq Government was hawing about declaring war and the German Ambassador (Herr Grober) was still in his Embassy and up to no good. Indeed, Sir Basil Newton was apprehensive as to the course affairs there might take and enquired about the possibility of troops from India!

Next day our "Indian" Valentia arrived from Cairo and by evening we got as far as Shaiba where Eightyfour Bomber Squadron R.A.F. (Squadron Leader Thompson) was stationed. They were guarded by men of the Assyrian Levy Corps who, outwardly, seemed quite efficient. (They wore peacock's feathers in their hats!). On September 6th, after a stop at Muharrak Island, we reached Sharjah on the Oman Peninsula. This was a night-stop for the old "Flying Forests" of Imperial Airways, the passengers being accommodated in a typical "Beau Geste" fort which, very necessarily, had some of its rooms air-conditioned. It also claimed to have the best wine-cellar in the Middle East but, as we had no money left, we could not sample the Champagne which was the speciality!

On September 7th, after a stop to refuel at Jiwani in Mekran, we reached Karachi in the evening and the next day Ambala where I got a car to take me up to Simla.

It was not a very good way of returning urgently to India, taking 16 days in all. But for the fact that I was able to "pull strings" it might have taken several weeks. Certainly it was a "cheap trip" for it was all on Government transport and most of the "subsis-



tance" on Government rations. It was, however, a muddle—the sort of muddle that always occurs when Britain goes to war and nothing is ready. It cannot be described as a "planned strategic move" but at any rate no blame could be laid, this time, at India's door. The general "feeling" was quite different from that of August 1914—no enthusiasm and everyone thoroughly annoyed that "the Boche had done it again". There was no "Rat-a-plan" for Marl-brouck!

*The Phoney War*

IN THESE chapters on the war years 1939-46 no attempt has been made to chronicle events in detail, all of which have been traversed at length elsewhere. Thus I merely recount various trends, certain happenings in which I was personally involved, and some references to important actors in on the stage with whom I came into close contact.

On arrival at Simla I found that there had been some changes and many new threads which I had to pick up. General Sir Eric de Burgh was now Chief of the General Staff; Sir Jeremy Raisman had followed Sir James Grigg as Finance Member of Council; Mr. (later Sir) Eric Coates had replaced Sir Archibald Rowlands in charge of Military Finance and Mr. (later Sir) Olaf Caroe was Secretary for Foreign Affairs in place of Sir Aubrey Metcalfe.

If in England there had been a lack of enthusiasm—though no shirking of the hard task which lay ahead—for the war, there was, at first, a good deal of apathy in high places in Simla. No one knew quite what was going to happen, how the war would develop and what India might be called upon to do. In the political field there was, at first, some bewilderment, though the traditional political objection to India being drawn into a war which was not of her making and in which Indians had no say in defence policy was clearly evident. It appeared to be forgotten that it was Hitler who started the war and not Britain. Matters were not improved by news of the build up of the 4th Indian Division in Egypt during the autumn of 1939 and the previous despatch of an Indian infantry brigade to Singapore.

In an endeavour to allay political fears, on September 11, Lord Linlithgow addressed both Houses of the Assembly at Simla. But the internal situation showed no improvement, and "non-co-operation" in any war effort began to be openly discussed. Thus, on September 26, Lord Linlithgow saw Mr. Gandhi and Mr. M. A.

Jinnah, as representing the Congress and the Muslim League respectively, at Simla. It was confidently thought that he would ask them to co-operate and, if they refused, to warn them that action would have to be taken against those who preached non-co-operation—in other words, “a show down” which would clear the air. But Lord Linlithgow was a man who believed in negotiation and often changed his mind overnight. Thus, it seems, he gave no clear warning and the talks drifted on into a period of political bargaining. He saw the two leaders again on November 1. But in the meantime things did not improve; attempts were made to tamper with the Indian Army and there were a few desertions.

I was soon involved in a number of projects. It was obvious that, in conditions of global war, Operations and Intelligence could no longer be concentrated under one head. A re-organisation, including additional staffs, was urgently necessary, though this was not finally accomplished until the middle of 1940. In addition a new “directive” was required to deal with the attrition of frontier disturbances which still continued and absorbed men and materials required for other purposes. Plans already existing for Higher Organisation for war had to be put into action; the policy for the expansion of defence forces, which we all knew would soon be required, had to be prepared; and means of propaganda and counter-propaganda had to be urgently developed. All these projects required a great deal of work and, in addition, there were frequent meetings with the Viceroy to explain the external and internal situations and report progress.

At first there was little real news or any “lead” from the War Office. No doubt they had their own problems. We knew that the British Expeditionary Force, under Lord Gort, had begun to move over to France on September 10. The Mediterranean was again opened to commercial shipping. Certain Indian Mule Corps were asked for to go to France and actually arrived there in December 1939. It seemed that the War Office might be envisaging another period of siege warfare on the Maginot Line and that this war would follow the lines of 1914-18! It is almost axiomatic that a new war never follows the lines of a preceding one! On September 16 I recorded, “I cannot understand this war!”

But matters in India developed as we feared. Sir Jeremy Rais-

man tightened the purse-strings—perhaps he had instructions from elsewhere. There was to be no money for defence expansion in India unless the British Government would agree to foot the bill! This put a check for the time being on all practical proposals and on the placing of orders for the new arms and equipment which we knew would sooner—or perhaps too late—be required. But there were some bright spots. H. H. The Aga Khan offered the services of his son Ali Shah, The Ali Khan, for military duty. The Nepalese Prime Minister, General Sir Joodha Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana, offered a contingent for service in India and plans were made to receive it. Monsieur J. Merens, Netherlands Consul-General, offered services if Holland should become deeply involved.

News from Europe became more and more confused, and the sinking of the Aircraft Carrier "Courageous" was reported. Poland had been overrun and Germany and Russia were dismembering it. The attitudes of Russia and Turkey were very uncertain and plans were required in case either, or both, entered the war against us. In such a case Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan would be clearly affected and the possibility of an Indo-Afghan agreement came under consideration. Negotiations started on the feasibility of training Afghan army officers in India.

It was about this time that I first met Mr. Desmond Young at a tea-party given by Mr. Amar Kumar of the *Civil and Military Gazette*. Sir Jawala Srivastava from Cawnpore and Mr. Gibson of the *Times of India* were also present. All these were very useful people.

By December 1939 the German radio from Berlin was already active with broadcasts in English and Urdu directed to India with Indian announcers and commentators. A monitoring system for all foreign broadcasts in English was developed, in which Mr. Alexander Inglis of the *Times* gave much valuable help. Special articles to reach the educated classes were written for Indian Dailies and Illustrated Weeklies, but something had to be done for the peasantry, especially in areas where recruiting took place, as these periodicals did not reach them. By now many villages in northern India had community radio sets with loud speakers, around which villagers would gather in the evenings to hear special Indian pro-

grammes put out by All India Radio, including news, music and talks. At this time Mr. Fielden was Director of A.I.R.

In order to reach these people and, particularly, *Faujīs* or soldiers, it was decided to revive my "Petre Noble" talks in another form, as explanatory half-hour chats in the vernacular on news and developments in current affairs dealing with the war. I wrote the first two or three scripts in Urdu and was to have delivered them myself. At the last moment Mr. Advani, Station Director, New Delhi, decided that I had not the correct "Lahore accent", a sort of counterpart to the "Oxford accent"! It was in vain to protest that the jargon of Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, Sindhi and Pushtu words which I used made me highly intelligible to those who would never understand high-flown Urdu and Persian phrases delivered by a scholar. So an Indian commentator was selected to replace me and did a most excellent job, employing a "stooge" to assist him. The latter from time to time interjected remarks such as, "Yih bahut achchha hai" (that's very good), "Yih bilkul thik hai" (that's entirely correct), "Yih sachcha bat hai" (how true), "Wah, Wah! Shabash!" (Bravo, Well done!"). Whenever I had time I would listen to these talks with the greatest interest and amusement and, before I left India in the summer of 1943, "Petre Noble Sahib Bahadur" had been on the air over 500 times.

As one of the most important areas to be reached was the Punjab, we received much valuable help and advice from Sir Sikander Hayat Khan Tiwana who was then Premier of the Provincial Legislature, his brother Khizar Hayat Khan, and Nawabzada Khurshid Ali Khan who was Sir Sikander's right hand political adviser and a member of the Muslim League Council. Another collaborator, from the United Provinces, was Sufi Mohamad Ali Shah Idrisi, then a very old man.

There was no doubt that during the first six months of uncertainty a certain amount of "business as usual" went on. Much of this may have existed in "business" circles. But in official circles, where many men, both British and Indian, were working long hours each day, it was necessary that they should get their daily exercise and some form of recreation from time to time. Otherwise "all work and no play would make Jack a dull boy". Thus, both at Delhi and Simla there were occasional Viceregal Garden Parties,

Horse Shows, Races and evening Gymkhanas at Annandale and so forth. As an example, on November 14, 1939, the King George V memorial Statue was unveiled by the Viceroy at the end of Kingsway in New Delhi amid scenes of pomp and pageantry. For my sins, sitting on the summit of the Indian War Memorial Arch, I gave an unscripted commentary on a part of the ceremony for All India Radio. But in all these activities there was an under-current of anxiety and people were "looking over their shoulders" wondering what was going to happen.

By late November Russia was still aligned with Germany and her possible moves were causing anxiety to Afghanistan whose frontiers, on the west, marched with hers. The main areas of potential friction were the north-west between Mazar-i-sharif on the Oxus river and Bamian and in the south-west from the direction of Merv towards Herat. Sir Aubrey Metcalfe, when Foreign Secretary, had visited Kabul seeking some form of rapprochement. In this he was unsuccessful, but he returned with glowing accounts of the friendliness and hospitality of the Afghan leaders. The General Staff, with long memories of three Afghan Wars and what had happened to British diplomats and military forces in Afghanistan and her present policy in regard to India's western tribal areas, were not so sanguine.

It was, however, urgently necessary to see if something could not be done to bolster up Afghan defences in the event of Russian aggression, for the last things wanted were Russian influences in Kabul, or Russian forces in Afghanistan. The Afghan Government itself was apprehensive and seemed to be favouring discussions on defence matters. After long correspondence it was finally agreed that I should go to Kabul and see if anything could be done.

Among the matters which might be discussed with the Afghan Government were a general consideration of defence aid to Afghanistan—short of any direct aid with British and Indian forces—improvement of communications with India, provision of ground organisation for the Afghan Air Force, now in embryo and being trained by a Royal Air Force Mission, the establishment of schools of instruction for Afghan officers both at Kabul and in India and the possibility of a limited supply of arms and equipment. Major H. S. (The Duke) Lancaster who had been

Military Attache at Kabul was detailed as my assistant and interpreter as he knew members of the Afghan Government well. The latter insisted that my visit should be *incognito* under conditions of strict secrecy.

I reached Peshawar on the evening of December 10 and next morning, after getting special passports from the Intelligence Bureau, left in a delapidated hired car with a Pathan driver. Lancaster joined me at the frontier barrier at Torkham at the western end of the Khaibar Pass. After delays over passports and Customs and more similar delays at Dakka, the headquarters of the Afghan Sarhaddar, we drove on to Jallalabad, where we were met by the Arbab Sahib (Indian Consul) and stayed the night at his modern bungalow outside the city. He was most hospitable, but being a "radio fan", insisted on playing Indian music, at full blast on his set, until far into the night. I think he thought we enjoyed it, but it murdered sleep!

Next day we drove on to Kabul over an execrable road, which was one of the communications I was to try to get improved. We had a puncture every few miles. At Jagdalack we stopped by the road side for a sandwich lunch and, to our horror, an Italian Embassy car carrying Signora Karoni, wife of the Italian Ambassador, to Peshawar appeared. Unfortunately she knew Lancaster and recognised him and stopped to talk. Both she and her husband were very mischievous people, but I was sitting by the road some distance away, huddled in an ancient *poshteen* (sheepskin coat) and a fur cap and she mistook me for a Pathan lorry driver.

The weather was bitterly cold and in the afternoon we crawled over the Lataband Pass (8,200 feet) just before the falling snow made it impassable. We reached Kabul at nightfall.

The British Embassy at Kabul is a large white two-storeyed house, set in a compound with detached offices and outbuildings at the far end of a long road of modern villas which runs below the Asmar Heights. These had been the scene of the public execution of the rebel Bachha Sakao and his associates after the suppression of his insurrection by the Afghan Government some years previously.

On December 13 I went with H.B.M.'s Minister, Sir Kerr Fraser-Tytler, to the Foreign Office to call on the Foreign Minister, Ali

Mahomed Khan, and in the afternoon to meet H.R.H. the Prime Minister, Mohamed Hashim Khan, at his residence. The next day a series of talks started at which the Prime Minister, the Defence Minister H. R. H. Marshal Shah Mahmud, the Foreign Minister, H.B.M's Minister and Major Lancaster were present. On one occasion the Chief of Staff attended but made no contribution.

The Premier was a very remarkable personality. Tall, broad-shouldered, with fine features and a well trimmed "torpedo" beard shot with grey, always impeccably dressed in a dark lounge suit bearing the unmistakable signs of a first-class London tailor. The Foreign Minister preferred correct Morning Dress while Marshal Shah Mahmud wore uniform. The latter, a younger brother of the Premier, struck me as the least able of the three, as being rather pompous, somewhat on his dignity at having to discuss matters of military policy with a mere Brigadier and anxious as to what the discussions might disclose regarding his own responsibilities.

On two occasions I took tea with the Premier and the other participants in the talks at his well-appointed villa. It was a two-storeyed suburban type of house, not very large and with a small garden. From the interior decoration of the reception rooms, the furniture, the water-colours on the walls, the silver tea service, the delicate china crockery, the sandwiches and cakes, one would have thought one was in one of the stately homes of England. There was however no hostess, or any ladies, present and the men-servants were clad in the evening dress of hotel waiters. Their features were strangely Grecian, which lent substance to the story that the Royal Afghan attendants were drawn from a small clan in a remote part of the Laghman valley, near Jallalabad, whose ancestors had been soldiers of Alexander the Great and had settled there after he had passed through on his invasion of India.

At these tea-parties the conversation was general and on a variety of subjects, and I found that the Premier, who had been educated at Dehra Dun in India, spoke Urdu. Thus I was able to talk to him direct instead of through Major Lancaster, to the manifest annoyance of the Foreign Minister who could not understand what we were saying and suspected all sorts of intrigue.



It is quite impossible to succeed in diplomacy unless the diplomat has either a big stick or a fat purse, or both. "First the medicine and then the jam". I had neither. As a preliminary I was subjected to a long lecture on the short-comings of the Indian Government, their "unfruitful demonstrations" and "wordy promises". I bore this in silence as I was told this was usual on such occasions. It soon emerged that the Afghan Government had no real plans to meet external aggression and that their half-trained and equipped regular forces, backed by tribal *lashkars*, were really only capable of dealing with internal disorders. At first they were inclined to ask me to come to Afghanistan, examine the situation and prepare plans, and tentatively agreed that I should return early in 1940 for that purpose.

But then they had second thoughts. Marshal Shah Mahmud produced a list of the vehicles, arms and equipment—which I suspected he had prepared overnight—which they required. A rapid calculation showed that it would cost several million pounds. I had to explain that the British Government would not agree to supply all this unless they knew of adequate plans to use it, that personnel were trained in its use and that it would be properly utilised, maintained and not wasted.

It seemed to me that the Afghan Government must have expected some such answer, and scaled their requirements accordingly, for at once the Premier indicated that he did not wish to continue the military talks further, but would continue negotiations through the normal diplomatic channels. Thus the discussions came to an abrupt end, but they were not entirely unfruitful. A great deal of ground had been covered and it seemed that the Afghan Government realised their defence deficiencies and might be moving towards some form of mutual assistance pact, if certain major policy matters were agreed.

In addition certain personal contacts had been made, and from time to time, later, I exchanged friendly unofficial letters with both H.R.H. the Prime Minister and Marshal Shah Mahmud. The former had asked me, "Why are British Generals always so suspicious of Afghan overtures?" This was a difficult question to answer in conference and had to be laughed off. Later, in correspondence with him, it became a joke between us and we gave assurances that

such "suspicions", on both sides, no longer existed. I think we had both "kissed the Blarney Stone".

Before the end of the year General Sir Bahadur Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana and his brother Colonel Shanta Jung Bahadur Rana came to Delhi to complete arrangements for the arrival of the Nepalese contingent. General Bahadur was a short stocky man of middle-age with a slight impediment in his speech, but we got on well together. About the same time the Japanese Resident Officer, Colonel Teshima, was replaced by Colonel Ichida, a somewhat taciturn officer.

The year 1940 began with further troubles in Waziristan, engineered, once again, by the Faqir of Ipi. Serious raids were carried out into the settled Bannu District and on the large villages of Latambar and Bahadur Khel, between Bannu and Kohat, by gangs from the Ahmadzai Salient. This "political anachronism" was a triangular wedge of tribal territory stretching eastwards like a finger into the Bannu administered district, reaching to within a mile or so of the Bannu-Kohat road. The base of the finger, some 25 miles in length, lay on the Kurram river to the west and the depth, from west to east, was some 20 miles. It should have been *chopped off and included in the administered district many years previously*, but was probably left in tribal hands as it was a trackless waste of low, scrub-covered ridges and nalas, with very little water and that only at a spring called Daryobe near the centre of the salient.

It was in this area that gangs of Wazirs collected to lie up, under cover from air observation, to wait a favourable opportunity to raid. Subsequently the gang would escape by the same route and was very difficult to intercept on the road from Miranshah to Thal-in-Kurram, which ran near the western base of the salient. This raiding had become an intolerable nuisance and it was decided to penetrate the salient, construct a road to and a Post at, Daryobe from where the salient could be dominated. The cost of such an operation would fall on Indian revenues, so the sanction of the Secretary of State in Whitehall had to be obtained—a matter of lengthy correspondence. Finally, a force of two British and four Indian battalions, with supporting troops was employed, and the operation lasted from March 19 to May 7. The

sent referred to the talk as, "the usual geography lesson", but it undoubtedly served a useful purpose, got good publicity though much criticism and both the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief told me that it had done a lot of good. The main theme of both talks was to explain the premise that the bastions of India's defence—under the circumstances then obtaining—lay in the eastern Mediterranean on the one hand and in Malaya on the other and that only by maintaining these could the war, by land and air, be kept away from India itself. It was the use of Indian troops to maintain these bastions that was the main theme of the "non-co-operators".

In April 1939, developments in Europe began to have their effect on public thinking in Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. Russia had attacked Finland in December 1939 and peace was signed in Moscow on March 12, 1940. Russia was thus free for further adventures. In April, Hitler invaded Denmark and Norway, and we launched the ill-fated British expedition to Norway. Early that month, following the talks in December 1939, the Afghan Government began to make further overtures, and it seemed possible that they were again considering some form of mutual assistance pact, with the preliminary of accepting a Military Training Mission followed by the supply of arms and equipment. We even got so far as selecting the officer to lead the Mission and I was warned to be ready to return to Kabul to complete the arrangements. But negotiations were protracted; the rapid developments of the war and British disasters gave the Afghan Government food for further thought, and they seem to have decided to "sit on the fence with fingers crossed".

What was more important was a change of heart about the expansion of India's forces. The battle went for and against, but ultimately there was agreement to go ahead on a project estimated to cost Rs. 18 crores initially and Rs. 12 crores recurring. Probably the Indian Finance authorities were hopeful that the British Government would pay most of the cost eventually—as in fact it did. In view of the colossal expenditure later for the war, this was a mere bagatelle.

The internal situation did not improve. Mr. Jinnah in particular was stepping up his demands on the Government. Among

the Sikhs the Akali Dal party gave cause for anxiety, while in Singapore, trouble in an Indian infantry battalion was detected and nipped in the bud. Early in May the War Office asked for 8 British infantry battalions to be returned from India and this number was, later, increased to 12. They were to be replaced by Territorial units from England in July or August.

May 1940 was a critical month. On May 10 Hitler invaded Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg. Mr. Neville Chamberlain resigned and Mr. Winston Churchill became Prime Minister. By May 15 the Germans were across the river Meuse and the Dutch army capitulated. Encirclement of the Belgians, French and British followed. By May 28 the Belgians had surrendered and on that day the British evacuation from Dunkirk began. The Phoney war was over.

In India the evening lights which had been lit, already began to flicker.

*Perplexities and Frustrations*

WHEN THE news of the Dunkirk evacuation, starting on May 28 1940, was received, Government offices had already returned to Simla. It came as a profound shock and the details which dribbled in—mainly from Press sources—during the next few days, stating that 4/5ths of the British Expeditionary Force less all its equipment had been got away, did little to allay anxiety. Mr. Churchill's famous speech on June 4—"we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight in the fields . . . we shall never surrender"—merely indicated to us that a full-scale invasion of Britain was imminent and that the situation could hardly have been worse.

Pronouncements such as this, though full of high courage and no doubt very necessary, may serve to put heart into those for whom they are immediately intended. But their effect on others who are anxiously watching events from afar, with little real knowledge of what is going on, may be very different. Incidentally, we soon learned that the Indian Mule Corps then in France had managed to get away to England from Le Havre, but had lost all their mules and equipment.

On May 31 a Press conference, attended by some 60 journalists, was held at Gorton Castle, Simla, when as much amplification of the published news as was possible, was given. It was a fact that we had had very little news from official sources and no attempt was made to "play down" the seriousness of the situation. That evening Sir Robert Cassells broadcast a talk on India's war effort, as had previously been arranged. It was somewhat of an anti-climax.

There were, however, private and secret consultations between the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief as to what the future might hold. If Britain was invaded by sea-borne forces and subjected to heavy air attack, it was possible that large portions of the country might be overrun before the onslaught could be con-

trolled, and the Government and the Royal Family might have to move to Northern Ireland, or Canada, or some other area from which Government could be carried on and the Commonwealth effort co-ordinated. In such an event, what would be our position in India, for it was impossible to blink the possibility that we might have a hostile population to deal with? Roughly speaking our view was that in spite of serious political agitation there would be a considerable body of Indian goodwill, that the Indian Army would remain loyal, that should the occasion necessitate it a special gendarmerie could be formed, that in the event of political non-co-operation resort could be had to rule by ordinance, that Indian business and industry would have everything to gain and nothing to lose by any change in the *status quo*. It was felt, however, that if the situation in general deteriorated further, it might be necessary to institute "keeps" in certain areas for the protection of loyal citizens. In the meantime India's capacity for production had to be speeded up. All this, looked at now, may seem to have reflected counsels of despair. But that was not so and there was no diminution of morale in high places. In view of the little that was then known of immediate or later future events it was merely prudence to face and be prepared for eventualities.

On June 1, the War Office suddenly asked for 4 British battalions to be sent to the United Kingdom (later cancelled) and for 4 Indian battalions for Palestine. This was the start—apart from the 4th Indian Division and supporting troops already in Egypt—of further demands, from time to time, from India, and began to follow the pattern of the 1914-18 war. Over the following years Indian formations sent overseas included the 5th, 6th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, and 17th Divisions and the 3rd Motor Brigade. Certain Mule Corps had already been involved in the debacle in France, and the other troops went to Kenya, Aden, Somaliland, Borneo, Hongkong, Malaya, the Sudan, Italy, Iraq, Abyssinia and Burma. The exploits of those which fought in North Africa are recorded in three paper-back volumes, *The Tiger Strikes*, *The Tiger Kills* and *The Tiger Triumphs*, respectively. These were published for the Government of India by H.M. Stationery Office and were prepared by Lieutenant-Colonel W. G. Hingston, Indian Army, assisted by eyewitness reports from members of the Inter-

services Public Relations Directorate, set up by General Headquarters, New Delhi. These observers in the field included Lieutenant-Colonel Desmond Young, M.C., Captain Motilal Katju M.C., and Captain M. K. U. Nayar, M.B.E. I saw nothing of the divisions in North Africa and will only refer to other formations which I visited elsewhere from time to time.

Prior to the outbreak of war and during the years of war which followed, H.E. The Marquess of Linlithgow was Viceroy of India and I came into close and frequent contact with him. I had, previously, known certain other Viceroys. Lord Chelmsford was a charming English country-gentleman who had borne the burden of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms; Lord Reading—perhaps the most brilliant of them all—with all his ability as a lawyer and parliamentarian could never be more than Rufus Isacs; Lord Irwin was very religious, aloof and rather unapproachable; Lord Linlithgow was a great nobleman and aristocrat and although he never emphasised it, he was born that way and could not help it.

He had, perhaps, the hardest task of them all and carried the burden longer than any of the others. Not only had he the ultimate responsibility for major matters of policy connected with the war, but he had to control a highly hostile collection of politicians, to maintain law and order in a difficult internal situation and at the same time endeavour to carry out constitutional reforms which he had at heart. Any one of these responsibilities might have daunted a less courageous man. In addition I think he was not always well served by the Secretary of State at the India Office in Whitehall. I came not only to enjoy his friendship but to form a great admiration for the manner in which he reached the many vital decisions he had to make, though at times I was exasperated by his change of mind at the last moment.

He was very tall—as were all his family—but was physically handicapped as a result of poliomyelitis when a young man, though he seldom showed this in public. He often walked with a stick, did not like to have to stand for long periods at public functions, had to have some rest and massage every day and was, I think, often in pain. Beneath a somewhat solemn official manner he had a great sense of humour and in private conversation his knowledge and valuation of the personalities who surrounded him

was astonishing. He was seldom wrong in his appraisal of an individual.

In his bedroom, where I saw him on several occasions, he had a large glass tank of water in which were a number of tortoises, or perhaps small terrapins. These gave him great pleasure and he claimed to be able to call each one by name to come to the surface and take a tit-bit from his fingers. When he first demonstrated this to me, being sceptical, my mind flashed back to the dialogue in *Henry IV*, Part I, Act iii, Scene 1, between Hotspur and Owen Glendower:

*Lord L.*: I can call terrapins from this vasty tank.

*Myself*: Why, so can I, or so can any man. But will they come when you do call to them?

At any rate he called a name and up came a small terrapin to receive a reward. But whether it was the right one I could not fathom. I still doubt it.

He had a puckish side to his character for on his bedroom window-ledge he kept a catapult and a supply of small clay pellets, with which he was an expert marksman. In the grounds of Viceregal Lodge many conifers were fairly close to the house, and on them brown monkeys and *Langurs*, the great grey Himalayan Apes, would come in the mornings to sun themselves. Quietly, from his window, Lord Linlithgow would tweak one with a clay pellet. The surprised Simian, not knowing what had suddenly stung him, usually vented his annoyance on an innocent and unsuspecting companion and the domestic squabble which ensued caused Lord Linlithgow the greatest amusement. Viceroys are really very human.

From the grounds of Viceregal Lodge was a magnificent panoramic view of the vast distant sweep of the eternal snows on the Himalayas to the north. On a pedestal was a bronze plate on which were engraved rays pointing to the major peaks with their names. Lord Linlithgow was delighted to show this to his friends and to give them a great deal of information about each peak and the valleys and sub-mountain tracts which lay below them. There was a similar view from the Commander-in-Chief's study at "Snow-



don", his official residence. This was a long panelled room with wide windows to the north and a large bay-window in the west in which Sir Robert Cassells had his desk. He always sat with his back to the window and often, when sitting half-facing him discussing some memorandum, I would fall into a reverie induced by the beauty of the sunlight, or moonlight, on the distant snows. I would be brought back to earth by a sharp rebuke of "You are not listening!"

During Lord Linlithgow's Viceroyalty, Mr. (later Sir) Gilbert Laithwaite was his Private Secretary. He bore a very heavy burden uncomplainingly and imperturbably and I never saw him ruffled even in the most vexatious situations. Always cheerful and smiling, he was a devotee of classical music and no doubt found relaxation from his gramophone and records. In the evenings he might be seen taking the air from the back seat of a very large open car of unknown origin and ancient vintage.

Following Dunkirk the situation in Europe began to deteriorate rapidly. On June 5 the Battle of France began and on June 17, Marshal Petain asked for an armistice. Italy had already declared war on Britain and France on June 11. Attacks on Britain were expected any day and on June 20, Mr. Churchill told the House of Commons: "All depends on winning the battle here in Britain, now this summer." On July 10 the Battle of Britain began.

During July and August, apart from the military expansion programme, there were many problems to be tackled in India. The situation in French and Portuguese possessions had to be watched carefully, for now that Metropolitan France had capitulated it was uncertain whether the authorities in Chandernagore and Pondicherry would join General de Gaulle's "France Libre"—which had been recognised by the British Government—or adhere to the Petain regime. These small isolated foreign territories on Indian soil were all potential rendezvous for enemy agents and saboteurs in addition to their traditional occupation of organised smuggling. It was about this time that suspicions began to be aroused as to the intentions of Japan. So far the United States had made no move in any direction.

Now that Britain had become a fortress and her fate hung in the balance, the supply of equipment and aircraft for Indian expan-

sion, as well as urgently needed machine tools was cut off and it was impossible to foresee when it could be resumed. Plans were discussed for an Indian aircraft factory (possible location Bangalore) and the building of other factories in the Gangetic plain. These would have to be protected from possible bombing and parachute landings. In all these discussions Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan took a leading part.

The maintenance and protection of the main seaports of Calcutta, Karachi and Bombay—particularly the latter—became a major priority. Early in 1940 I had been to Bombay to discuss security with Sir Roger Lumley (later Lord Scarborough) who was then Governor. In June he came to Simla for further detailed discussions.

The entry of Italy into the war, with a port on the Red Sea, brought the conflict very much closer to India. It became necessary to let the public know something of what this meant and to endeavour to reassure them by giving some details of what India had already done in the military and industrial fields and what was proposed for the future. On the political side not much change of heart could be expected, but in other directions a large measure of co-operation could be forthcoming. Thus I was told to put certain facts before the public in a series of broadcasts on All-India Radio during late June, July and August. As a result I earned approbrium as a "Government military propagandist" which, in fact, I was! In the situation which faced us then if nothing was said we were accused of ineptitude and lack of foresight on the one hand, and if we put out information about expansion we were dubbed war-mongers squandering India's resources against her will. Whatever we did was wrong!

Since these talks gave a very reasonable picture, in general terms, of what had already been done and what was projected for the future, dependent on developments in the course of the war, they may be briefly recapitulated. The plans for expansion and modernisation of the defence forces stemmed from the detailed proposals worked out during the quinquennium before September 1939, when they were put before the Chatfield Committee. The plan was to provide an adequate modernised force, balanced with naval and air forces, dependent on mechanical transport instead

of animals and with weapons suitable to changing conditions. It also postulated sufficient adequately trained and equipped troops to man India's oversea responsibilities to west and east. One great stumbling block which had been surmounted was finance and the cost was spread over several years. Before the bulk of the weapons and equipment could be obtained the war was upon us.

In late June 1940 the immediate increase of 100,000 men in the army had been announced. This was only an initial expansion, to be added to later, and was based on the accommodation and training facilities then available or under construction. The Royal Indian Navy personnel was to be increased by 200 per cent and naval training establishments at Bombay and Karachi expanded accordingly. This increase was required to man the merchant ships which had been requisitioned for mine-sweeping and for anti-submarine patrol. The Indian wing of the Army in India reserve of Officers was called up and a new training establishment for Indian Officer cadets to accommodate 500 at each six months course, came into action. This was expected to provide 1,100 Indian commissioned officers per year.

Plans were put in hand to train Indian pilots and ground staff to quadruple the Indian Air Force, and training establishments at Lahore and Ambala were expanded. Civil aviation authorities undertook to recruit and train 300 pilots and 2,000 mechanics to form an initial reserve for the regular airforce. The limiting factor in all this expansion was the problem of obtaining aircraft, and plans were made to buy what was available and suitable abroad and, later, to increase resources by manufacture or assembly in India.

The plan to provide more factories has already been mentioned. Already large quantities of textiles, leather goods, boots, brushes, tents, clothing and other manufactured goods and commodities had been sent overseas, as well as food-stuffs. Indian industrialists were fully aware of India's potentialities in this field and there was no lack of energetic co-operation. The uncertainty of the continuation of essential military equipment supply from Britain was

The political skies were still dark and the general attitude of political parties at that time can best be indicated from certain quotes of articles and letters appearing in the Press.

At the conference arranged by the Defence Department for party leaders at Delhi on April 8, already mentioned, among those present had been Mr. A. S. Aney, Sir Henry Gidney (Anglo-Indian community), Pandit H. N. Kunzru, Mr. P. N. Saprú, Sirdar Buta Singh and Rao Bahadur Shivraj. The only absentees of note among those invited were Mr. M. A. Jinnah, Sir H. P. Mody and Ghulam Bhik Nairang. Mr. Jinnah, in a letter published in the Press, explained his absence as follows:

[You] must be aware of the negotiations that are going on between H.E. the Viceroy and myself....Until the assurances asked for are definitely given and the basis for co-operation settled, I do not think I can take part in the proposed meeting.

Pandit H. N. Kunzru in a statement to the Press said, "The transformation of the outlook which the present situation requires appears to be a task beyond the military mind. A bold and comprehensive policy can only be laid down by an Indian Minister of Defence and the country be called upon to make the necessary sacrifices for its execution only by a national government."

From Berlin the Indian broadcaster, Dr. Malik, replied in invective:

For whom is England protecting India in the Eastern Mediterranean is the most important question that arises? Keeping in mind the past record of unbroken loot and exploitation of India by Englishmen ... England is protecting India only for her own sake.... Englishmen must leave India at once without bag and baggage and let Indians take care of themselves.... India must stand alone and continue its war of independence ... the sooner the better for the starving millions of Indians.

That was one side of the slate, but there was another. On June 12, in a broadcast on All-India Radio, Sir M. Zafrullah Khan said: "... It is our duty to help the allies with all the material and spiri-

tual means we possess so that there may be peace . . . and future generations of mankind may be saved from destruction." At the same time Sir Sikander Hayat Khan warned the peoples of the Punjab; "... It is the duty of all Punjabis to gird up their loins and prepare themselves for service for the safety of their countrymen."

Some of all this publicity had its effect on men of the Indian Army. There was the case of Sikhs of an Indian cavalry regiment refusing to embark at Bombay for service overseas. Later 108 men were tried by court-martial for mutiny, 16 being sentenced to death and 88 to 15 years imprisonment. Still later, further cases of indiscipline occurred, traceable directly to subversive propaganda.

There were discussions with Whitehall, on India taking responsibility for operations, if necessary, in Iraq, Iran and the Persian Gulf—projects which filled those of us who remembered the war of 1914-18 with foreboding. The question of offering Dominion status to India after the war came up with, in the meantime, the possibility of some political representation on the Viceroy's Council at the centre—perhaps a Defence Minister in place of the Commander-in-Chief.

The Battle of Britain had begun on July 10 and it was expected that invasion would follow swiftly. Fortunately it never materialised. During August a further contingent was sent from India to Egypt. The Italians from Eritrea began to threaten Somaliland and by August 15 they had broken through the eastern escarpment, threatening Berbera. The despatch of forces, including the Bikanir Camel Corps, to Somaliland was cancelled and arrangements were made to evacuate troops from Berbera.

About this time a young officer from S.O.E—an organisation run by Mr. Hugh Dalton—came to India to buy arms from commercial gunsmiths with which to arm Somali resistance groups. It was a crazy scheme. The weapons—sporting rifles, shotguns of various calibres, pistols and revolvers—were mostly very expensive products of the "presentation" type, chased, engraved and ornamented with ivory and enamel. There was very little ammunition available for these types and no means of getting any more. Objections were of no avail and the shops were compulsorily gut-

ted. I doubt if any of these weapons ever reached Somaliland and what happened to them I do not know. At any rate we refused to pay the bill.

Within India itself the attitude of the Sikh community—always susceptible to various forms of political and religious propaganda—and particularly the Akali party was causing anxiety in the Punjab. There had already been the incident, previously mentioned, at Bombay and steps now had to be taken to curtail the recruitment of Mazhbis and Ramdasias, certain Sikh menial classes. It was much later in the year, in December, that Sikhs in the army gave further trouble. This time it came both in Singapore and Hongkong where there were established Sikh colonies. There had already been some trouble in fitting Sikhs with gas-masks, to enclose the beards which they wear, but this had merely been a matter of modifying the "harness" and had no religious significance. On the other hand, for religious reasons, a Sikh does not entirely cover his head, either with a turban or a hat, and objection and refusal was now made to the wearing of the steel helmet. This helmet is very necessary to prevent head wounds and, if not worn, unnecessary casualties may occur, and any casualty is a liability.

For some time there had been a number of senior officers who felt that the Sikhs in the army were becoming more of a liability than an asset and wished to place a ban on all further Sikh recruitment and waste out those Sikhs still remaining in the army. On the other hand there were many who regarded the Sikhs, who had a long and honourable tradition of service, as some of the best fighting men and were aghast at this suggestion. The situation was, to some extent, parallel to that, already mentioned, when Lord Kitchener got rid of the Mapillas on account of their religious observances. The service of Sikhs in the army was, however, of great financial value to the Sikh community—a value which it was not in their interest to see lost. Accordingly, over the steel helmet issue a compromise had to be found.

Already during the spring of 1940, "Private armies" of Congress Volunteers and Khaksars were being organised by political parties in furtherance of the non-co-operation and independence movements. They were now being uniformed and drilled and, in both urban and rural areas, threatening to usurp the functions of

I got off from Calcutta next morning, August 20, in another Blenheim, this time with a Squadron Leader as pilot. The weather was still very thick and we stopped at Akyab (a most unpleasant airstrip at that time) for petrol, thence flying in thick cloud and heavy rain over the Arakan hills to Mingladon airfield in Burma.

In Rangoon I delivered my papers and saw the Governor, Admiral Sir Archibald Cochrane. He was quiet and reserved, with a strong suspicion of the Indian Government and a bad financial complex. After talks I expected to return to India next day, but the wireless set in the Blenheim had broken down, was irreparable and the plane could not fly until a new one had been received. So I was stuck! Next day I attended a conference with the Governor, Mr. Wise (Defence Counsellor) and Major General K. Macleod (G.O.C.). I was not impressed with the result. It seemed to me that Burma was trying to avoid any entanglement in the war (which was understandable) or any financial commitment in connection with it. She was interested in the Burma road and aid to Chiang Kai-shek in Chungking, and here I first heard rumours that some of the American aid may not have corresponded with the stencils on the boxes. Any suggestion of danger from Japan—which was very far away—left her unmoved. I thought the Governor was afraid we had designs on the vessels of the Irrawady Flotilla, shallow draught river steamers of which he was very proud. The steamers existing in 1914-15 had been requisitioned for Mesopotamia and some had foundered in bad weather while making the voyage round India.

All day it rained and in the evening a telegram came to say that the Blenheim was not to fly but that I should return to India by Imperial Airways Flying Boat, due at Rangoon next morning. The weather was still bad and the flight to Calcutta very bumpy. I finally got an R.A.F. Envoy back to Ambala and so to Simla by car. It had been an eventful trip and I was lucky to get away with it. The first Blenheim was a "write off", so it was rather expensive in transportation.

September 1940 saw the German "blitz" on London and the southern areas of England. The details of this bombing had the effect of stirring up anxiety regarding air attack on India. At last it became possible to begin to put into practice plans already made

for Anti-aircraft Defence (active) and Passive Air Defence on which pamphlets were issued. Steps went ahead on the siting and protection of new factories. The Linlithgow-Gandhi discussions on the political future broke down and the National Congress invited Mr. Gandhi to resume the leadership. The Japanese, now well established in China, had begun to make threats against French Indo-China and on September 27 they openly showed their hand by signing a 10-year pact with Germany and Italy. This was not a declaration of war, but it indicated that the Far Eastern threat to India was looming larger than ever before.

The first open evidence of this was the arrival of a Goodwill Mission from Thailand in October, headed by Captain Luang Dhamrong Navasvasti, Minister of Justice, with representatives from the Thai Foreign Office, Army and Navy. The Thais were obviously apprehensive and wanted material assistance with military equipment. As we could not supply any, nothing much came out of the discussions, but useful contacts had been made in spite of linguistic difficulties.

The second development was the staging towards the end of October of the first of a series of Defence conferences at Singapore which I was detailed to attend from India, taking with me junior assistants from the Royal Indian Navy and the Royal Air Force. Imperial Airways Flying Boat service then crossed India from Karachi to Calcutta, thence calling at Rangoon, Bangkok and Penang *en route* to Singapore. I joined the flight at Tal Tigra lake near Gwalior and stayed a night at the Embassy at Bangkok, where Sir Josiah Crosby (of whom more later) was H.M.'s Minister.

At Singapore I stayed in Government House grounds with Mr. Jones, the Deputy Governor who also had Major General (later Sir) John Duigan, Chief of Staff, New Zealand, staying with him. Johnny Duigan became a great friend. He had heart trouble and did not sleep well in the humid heat of Singapore. He used to wander into my room in the early hours each morning and we would drink tea and discuss many problems. Later he came to stay with me in Delhi.

The conference was opened, formally, by the Governor, Sir Shenton Thomas, in the Tanglin Gymnasium. Among the leading delegates, apart from Duigan, were Lieutenant-General (later Sir)



Popham, with Major General Dewing and Air Commodore Darwall, R.A.F., arrived on their way to Singapore and stayed for a few days. This gave us ample time to discuss with them matters which had arisen at the recent Defence Conference.

Early in December (a descent from the sublime to the ridiculous) Prince Ali Shah, the Ali Khan and eldest son of H.H. The Aga Khan arrived in Bombay for the purpose of rallying his father's religious adherents of the Ismaili sect of Muslims, many of whom lived in Kashmir. He had been commissioned as a Captain in the Intelligence Corps and had been working in the Middle East. Sir Roger Lumley was critical of his activities in Bombay so the Viceroy sent for him to come to Delhi. Whether the Viceroy saw him, or not, I am not sure. But I received a message to summon him privately to my house and remind him of his obligations and the duty he had come to India to fulfil. Our interview lasted about half an hour and I was surprised to find that Ali Shah was not the cosmopolitan play-boy I had envisaged. I told him quite frankly that he was now an Officer and that if he did not do what he was told he would be liable to disciplinary action. I asked him to keep in touch with me and keep me fully informed of his movements while in India. This he promised to do and then gave me the slip! I was annoyed and had to trace him to Central India but the Viceroy would not risk any disciplinary action. Shortly afterwards he went back to Bombay and left, I think, for East Africa where there were other Ismaili communities.

In October further details had been released of the "Second Stage" in India's military expansion. The emphasis had, originally, been placed on the role allotted to India as part of the Commonwealth effort in the field of production and supply. In the first eight months of war India's factories had already attained a degree of productivity greater than the peak reached in 1914-18. Already she was producing some 20,000 different items of arms and equipment while an additional 53,000 men had been enrolled in the fighting forces. 1941 would see further increased expansion in this field. The British Ministry of Supply, represented by the "Roger Mission", was now working in India deciding what she could best supply and what machinery she would require from overseas. Late in November the Eastern Group Economic Con-

ference met in Delhi, with representatives from India, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Kenya and Malaya to co-ordinate questions of production and supply within the Commonwealth area.

Before the end of 1940, Mr. Gandhi threatened that he would "fast unto death" unless his political demands were met. On this occasion the Secretary of State for India indicated that if Mr. Gandhi wished thus to fast, he was at liberty to do so. In other words he would not interfere with any action the Government of India might see fit to take if the necessity arose. Fasts of this nature, by leaders of various kinds, took place during the war and have even been continued, from time to time, in India since she achieved independence. They are a political, or religious, or sectional expedient to arouse feeling among an ill-informed and excitable public, and thus bring pressure upon Government to accept some demand. There is never any question of the "faster" actually dying, unless he, or his medical advisers, make a mistake in procedure and, for some reason, he goes beyond "the point of no return". There are several ways of prolonging a fast for many days and these are well known. Normally, before the "faster" is *in extremis*, either Government gives way or, more usually, a compromise is reached, or some face-saving formula which will allow the fast to end is arrived at. The "faster" should never be in danger, but the effect of his fast and growing weakness on fanatical supporters can be very dangerous indeed.

Late in November it was announced that Sir Robert Cassells would retire in the following spring and be succeeded as Commander-in-Chief by General Sir Claude Auchinleck. Sir Robert had been tired and strained and not too well for some time. He had become irritable and the news of his retirement did not improve his temper. His departure would mean changes in high military appointments, and the War Office intimated that they wanted to send out several senior British Service officers which would upset the recognised balance between British and Indian Army officers in the regional Commands. So wrangles started.

The year 1940 had been a difficult year, but certain foundations had been laid for 1941.

forces in India itself, excluding those overseas, as well over 500,000 men and estimated that by the end of 1941 we should top the 1,000,000 mark. "Hardly a day goes by without our figures for technical personnel being revised in an upward direction; more men for armoured units, artillery, engineers, ordnance and supply, medical units, airforce and Royal Indian Navy are being trained in our rapidly expanding establishments." About this time there was some pressure to raise a Bengali battalion. There had been one in World War I, but its record in Mesopotamia had not been a good one and the proposal was not proceeded with at that time. Later, Sir Sikander Hayat Khan, Prime Minister of the Punjab, visited Indian troops in Egypt and, on return, broadcast his impressions of what he had seen and heard.

The centre of interest—and apprehension for India—now moved to the East; to Burma, Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies. It seemed from reports that hostile action by Japan might be imminent and some observers placed such action as possible in April or May. These views might have been induced by a "war of nerves" but they could not be entirely disregarded. Proposals for assistance to Burma and Malaya were examined, a priority for shipping agreed on, ports were put in a further state of defence, plans for an Air Raid Warning and Observer system for Bengal were speeded up and preparations made for the air defence of the Digboi oilfields in Assam.

In April the Second Defence Conference was summoned at Singapore. I arrived there on April 15, accompanied by Lieut-Colonel Fawcett, Indian Army, who was to join Air Chief Marshal Brooke-Popham's staff. On arrival I had a spare day in which to visit some Indian units in Johore. Among these were 17th Dogras, Jhind State Infantry, Kapurthala State Infantry and Mysore State Infantry—all at or near Kluang. At Mersing, part of Brigadier Paris' Indian Brigade, were the 5/2nd Punjab Regiment and the 4/19th Hyderabad Regiment. At Kwantun, on the East coast, was a battalion of Gurkha Rifles and a battalion of 15th Punjab Regiment. The 2/15th Punjab Regiment was at Changi on Singapore Island and later went to Sarawak. All these units were happy and in good heart.

The Conference opened at the Naval Base at Singapore on April 21 and was known as B-D-A, i.e. British-Dutch-American.

Among the heads of delegations were Admiral Colvin (Australia), Major General Te Poorten (Dutch East Indies Chief of Staff), Colonel van Staveren (Dutch), Captain Purnell (U.S.A.), Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton (Naval C-in-C Singapore), Major General Lionel Bond (Commanding in Malaya) and Air Vice-Marshal Babbington (Air Officer Commanding). Air Chief Marshal Brooke-Popham presided, but his Chief of Staff, Major General Dewing was in hospital with some infection. The first day was given up mainly to procedural matters and I had an opportunity to meet other delegates. I had previously met Te Poorten, who was a very able soldier, as well as Admiral Layton and General Bond. I then had a meeting with General Bond and Lieut-General Riddell Webster, who had come out from the War Office with a watching brief. We discussed and agreed on the urgent need to set up a Corps Headquarters for troops in Malaya. There were already the best part of three Indian Divisions (9th, 11th, 17th) as well as an Australian Division in Malaya and these, together with the Singapore Fortress, were more than the present commander and his staff could deal with.

The Conference lasted, off and on, until April 26, sometimes in full session, sometimes at a lower level to deal with details of specific problems. Somewhat to my annoyance I found myself presiding at afternoon meetings when Brooke-Popham was not present and in charge of the Drafting Committee for the final report. This entailed considerable work which should have fallen to Major General Dewing had he been well, but I suppose it came to me as India had the major portion of the troops in Malaya and possibly I had had more experience of such matters than some others of the delegates.

The final draft was completed on April 24 and copies sent to all heads of delegations for comment or approval. By evening, all intimated agreement and the Report was finalised for signature. Next day the Conference met in full session in the late afternoon when, to my amazement, the naval representatives went back on their agreement and demanded a number of amendments. Furthermore, they launched a personal attack on Brooke-Popham who dealt with it in a very dignified and restrained manner. It was a most unseemly and unfortunate episode in an international con-

ference of this nature. It is always the duty of delegates to express their views clearly and to maintain them when necessary, but there is no need for them to become passionate about them before others, or to embark on recriminations.

As a result further work had to be done to incorporate the amendments and to prepare a telegraphic summary. The Report was finally signed by all heads of delegations on April 26.

Although the conference did a great deal of useful work in clarifying the problems involved and making recommendations, when it came to indicating what assistance could be given, all became hesitant. That the United States representative should be very non-committal was understandable. An exception was the Dutch Chief of Staff from Java, Major General Te Poorten, who offered unconditional co-operation. On my previous visit to General Boestra at Bandoeng I had seen something of the differences of opinion which existed between the Army (and Air Arm), the Navy and the civil administration at Buitenzorg and I wondered if Te Poorten had authority to speak for all three. Talking with him one evening after dinner, I tried, cautiously, to probe him on the point. He avoided my questions and somewhat abruptly changed the subject, thereby giving me the information I wanted.

I have always thought that Brooke-Popham made a mistake in accepting office accommodation and clerical assistance at the Naval Base. His staff consisted of only 4 officers and, no doubt, he was averse to setting up a large organisation elsewhere when he was mainly concerned with directional planning rather than command. But his decision meant that he had to rely on a subordinate formation for all his typing and cipher correspondence. This was alright in theory, but in practice neither his plans nor his recommendations to Whitehall could be kept secret and his staff officers discovered they were curtailed in what they put on paper and found the arrangement very embarrassing. The situation was not unlike that which confronted Admiral Mountbatten when he went, as "Supremo" with a small staff, to Delhi and, at first, intended to rely on General Headquarters, India, for similar facilities. Later he set up a huge organisation at Kandy, in Ceylon.

"Brookeham" had a habit of dropping off for a cat-nap after lunch and dinner. I was never quite certain whether he was really

asleep or not, but, undoubtedly, this gave certain senior officers the impression that he was "an old man and a back number". It may have been, also, that in some circles professional jealousy resented a Royal Air Force officer being placed in such a position. I saw a good deal of Brooke-Popham while in Malaya and have no doubt that he was quite adequate for the tasks he had to perform, but I could see that relations were not entirely happy. Before I left Singapore on the evening of April 27, he asked me to see him at his suite at the Sea View Hotel. He then suggested that if General Dewing had to be invalided, he would like me to replace him. I said I would be quite ready to come, but the matter would rest with the Commander-in-Chief in India. It was not a cheery prospect and I was not sorry that I heard no more about it.

In what follows I have recorded my movements in Malaya in some detail as my impressions of personalities, conditions and terrain made at that time may form a background to any historical study which may be made of the events which were to follow in 1942. From my notes then made, I have not been able to identify all the units which I visited, as they were somewhat cryptic in case they should fall into enemy hands during my return to India.

Between April 28 and May 3 I toured Indian units all over Malaya, seeing and talking to most of them. I reached Kuala Lumpur by train early on April 28, meeting Major General Barstow, commanding 17th Indian Division. His formation had not been long in Malaya and he himself was not too fit. Later, after the Japanese invasion, he was reported to have been killed when moving on the railway on the East coast to join his troops there. His body was, I believe, never recovered.

That day I visited the Australian Division Headquarters and met Major General Gordon Bennett and his Chief of Staff, Colonel Rourke, whom I had known when he was a student at the Staff College, Quetta. He was a good soldier and knew his job. That evening I again dropped in for a talk with Gordon Bennett. He was very irate about something which the Singapore Press had published about the Australian troops and could talk of little else. From what I saw, the Australians were a well set-up and smart body of men, but I gathered that they did not altogether like the

enervating climate and would have preferred to be employed on more active duties.

From Kuala Lumpur I flew to Ipoh in a Wearnes' civil aircraft and met Brigadier "Towser" Garrett, commanding 15th Indian Brigade. He also was an old friend and I was able to see some of his units as well as some of the 22nd Indian Brigade (Brigadier Painter). From there an Avro Cadet of the R.A.F. Volunteer Reserve took me to Taiping where I talked to British and Indian Officers of a battalion of Frontier Force Rifles. All these units were in good heart and had only minor complaints or requests to make. The Avro Cadet then took me to Penang, from where I went to Sungei Patani and was joined by Major General Murray Lyon, commanding 9th Indian Division. We motored on to Alor Star and stayed the night with Mr. Hall, British Agent, Kedah State, at the Residency.

Next day I paid an early visit to Tanjong Camp to see the 8th Indian Brigade (Brigadier Lay) and the East Surrey Regiment on a training exercise. From there to Changhun and the Malaya-Thailand frontier running along a high ridge overlooking the sea and the small port of Songkla, as well as the Kra Isthmus. Through a narrow pass and down a long valley, road and railway ran into the lower country of Thailand. It was a wonderful view, which I had already seen from the air. In the afternoon I was able to visit and talk to several Indian units, returning in the evening to the Residency at Alor Star, where I met Mr. Mohammad Sharif (Malay), Chief Secretary to the Government of Kedah State. He was most interesting on the subject of the Chinese in the State and the Chinese "millionaires" in Kedah and Penang. They were a very uncertain element, by no means popular with the indigenous Malays.

Practically all the Indian troops in Malaya were accommodated in tents, but the 11th Division in the North was mainly located in the rubber plantations for cover from air observation and attack. Beneath these trees there was no undergrowth, for nothing would grow under the dense foliage. The ground was firm but damp and men and vehicles existed in a perpetual dank twilight, to which the sun never penetrated. The climate—as in the rest of Malaya—was warm with high humidity and the daily heavy showers of

rain could be heard pattering on the leaves overhead, followed by a steady drip. Even during my short visit I found these camps extremely depressing and to live in them for long periods was bad for morale. There were, of course, clearings here and there and everything possible had been done to give men recreational facilities in the open. But the basic gloom could not be removed. In spite of this the men were very fit and there was very little sickness. The few cases of malaria had been contracted in India. Possibly the main trouble was what is known elsewhere as "Athlete's Foot", or "Athlete's Ear". All over Malaya, in a warm, humid climate where the day and night temperatures only vary by some 5 degrees—around 89 to 95 degrees Fahrenheit all the year round—the body is perpetually perspiring and unless care is taken a small fungus may grow beneath the skin between the toes, or in the ear, or elsewhere. This causes intense irritation and is not easy to treat. Another trouble, more serious, was Hook-worm, caught by walking about with bare feet.

On May 1 a civil aircraft was to meet me at Alor Star and take me over the "spine" to Kotah Bahru on the East coast. It was always necessary to clear the central peaks well before noon, when the clouds gathered daily. The plane—a Dragon on the daily service from Singapore to Penang—should have reached Alor Star by 10.30 a.m., but it was late and we did not take off till 11.15 a.m. There were only the pilot, a Malay steward and myself. Clouds were already gathering thickly and we climbed to 14,000 feet, dodging to the south to avoid storms. We finally cleared the central peaks with a margin of less than 500 feet, through a small gap between two storms.

Thence we should have followed a valley running South-east leading to Kotah Bahru, but as a result of our previous manoeuvres the pilot flew down a nearby valley trending North-east. Soon we were flying low over a railway with the sea to starboard and as we were overdue at our destination I was a little worried and went into his cabin to see what was happening. He admitted that he had never flown over the "spine" before, that he was completely lost, had no map and was trying to read the names on railway stations below. I happened to look forward and saw, some miles away, the unmistakable "crooked finger" of K. Patani, stretching



Divisions were gradually deployed in Iraq, while the 9th, 11th and 17th Indian Divisions were sent to Malaya.

During March-April 1941, the 5th Indian Division successfully drove the Italians from Abyssinia, while South African troops, from the south, regained Somaliland. About the same time the German counter-offensive started in North Africa and by the end of April the Germans had re-taken Bardia and Sollum, on the Mediterranean coast, had invested Tobruk and occupied the Halfaya Pass in western Egypt. Meanwhile British forces were being evacuated from Greece in the threat of a German attack. Trouble fostered by German agents began to spread in the Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. On April 30, disaffected Iraqi troops concentrated round the Royal Airforce open cantonment and airfield at Habbaniya, west of Baghdad and on May 2 launched an attack which was repulsed. The next day they were bombed by the R.A.F. Fighting went on in the area until May 8, by which time most of the Iraqi airforce had been destroyed.

It was on May 3 that Rashid Ali, who had been at the bottom of the disturbances, staged a coup d'etat in Baghdad and the Regent and his Government were driven out. Most of the oilfields and refineries were in insurgent hands and Iraqi troops seized Rutbah, in the desert on the air route to Jordan. Our reply was to occupy Basra with troops from India and three days later Lieutenant-General Sir E. P. Quinan left India to command all troops in Iraq while Major General (later Field Marshal Lord) William Slim went with him to command the 10th Indian Division already in the Basra area. General Sir H. M. Wilson (later Field Marshal, Lord) was placed in command of troops in Palestine and Jordan.

The whole situation was most unpleasant and undoubtedly the Iraqi dissidents were influenced by German successes in the Western Desert and Greece, and believed Germany would win the war. The situation worsened steadily, our advance towards Baghdad was slow, co-ordination between Iraq and Egypt was difficult, and on May 21 General Auchinleck flew to Basra to confer with General Wavell and clarify matters. By this time our troops had reached Fallujah on the Tigris and it now seemed that, as a result of developments in the war, Turkey might be drawn into the German-Italian fold.

While the leaders were conferring in Basra, the situation in Crete became acute—it was finally evacuated on June 4—and on his return to India General Auchinleck reported privately that General Wavell, with all his responsibilities, appeared a very tired man. On June 1, Indian troops entered Baghdad and we controlled the whole of southern Iraq. The presence of General Quinan as Corps commander raised difficulties of his position vis-a-vis our Ambassador there and these had to be straightened out. By May 30, the revolt of Rashid Ali had collapsed and he fled to Iran. The next day an armistice was signed and the Regent and his Government returned to Baghdad.

By this time trouble had become serious in Syria and on June 8, British and Free French forces entered the country from Palestine. General Catroux was appointed by General de Gaulle to command all Free French Forces in the Levant. The storm was, however, gathering on the Iraqi-Syrian border and it was obvious that troops would have to enter the country from Iraq along the course of the Euphrates river. Already much had been done to improve facilities at the Port of Basra to deal with increased movement of troops and supplies from India, but additional port personnel was required there. There were many other loose threads which needed tying up and, accordingly, I was sent to Iraq on June 21, to look into questions of organisation, intelligence, operations, staffs and the running of the Basra Port Trust.

Travelling by B.O.A.C. Flying boat, I stayed that night at Basra, meeting Sir John Ward, head of the Port Trust, as well as Messrs Prior (Resident Persian Gulf), Alban (Political Agent Bahrain) and Galloway (Political Agent Kuwait). There were many matters to be discussed and straightened out in the developing situation. Next day I landed in a gale and rough water on Lake Habbaniya. The Rest House there had been looted by Iraqi troops, the airport buildings and hangars damaged by our own bombing. Here I was joined by Colonel Cawthorn, Indian Army, who had come from Intelligence, Middle East. Some time later he took over as Director of Military Intelligence at G.H.Q., India. We were flown at once to Baghdad in an R.A.F. "Bombay".

Here I met General Quinan and then lunched with Sir Kinahan Cornwallis (Ambassador) and his family at the British Embassy.

Conferences followed all the afternoon, with the Ambassador, General Quinan, Air Vice-Marshal D'Albiac and others, for Slim's Indian Division was due to move from Baghdad into eastern Syria and, early the next morning June 28, it duly marched.

That day was spent dealing with Intelligence matters which were getting in a tangle. A number of different organisations were setting up Intelligence centres in Baghdad and it looked as if there would be standing room only. As one enthusiast remarked, "We are sprouting Intelligence centres like mushrooms!" I would have preferred to call them "fungi", but they had to be sorted out and co-ordinated. In the evening I dined quietly with the Ambassador. It was very hot and oppressive and after dinner we had a long talk, sitting in the dark in his garden on the bank of the Tigris, just above the Maude Bridge. Among other things he asked me whether I was satisfied, now that Slim's Division had left, that enough troops were left for the security of Baghdad. It was natural that he should ask this for he had had an anxious time during Rashid Ali's escapade. I knew that for some days we would have very few in Baghdad—not more than a few platoons. But if I disclosed this, or showed any doubts, I was sure that Cornwallis would send off signals to Whitehall and India demanding the return of some of Slim's troops, which was unthinkable. I was sure, also, that if Slim got early successes in Syria, which I had no doubt would be the case, there would be no trouble at all in Baghdad. So I took a calculated risk and said I was entirely satisfied. And so it turned out.

During that day a signal had come in from India directing me to stand fast in Baghdad and await the arrival of Sir Claude Auchinleck by air. He was expected early next day and I met him at the airport (June 30). He had come in one of the few R.A.F. Dakotas (D.C. 2) left in India and went straight to the Embassy, where I joined him with General Quinan after breakfast. I was told I was to accompany him to Cairo at once. Fortunately I had packed my small kit and had warned Wing Commander Perry-Keane, who had come with me from India, to be ready in case we had to move somewhere. The Dakota was by no means new—pilot Squadron Leader Burbery—and not very comfortable, but we took off from Baghdad at 10.0 a.m.

It was evident that Auchinleck was in a hurry, but it was not until we were well on our way that he told me he was to take over command in the Middle East from Wavell and that, at present, our trip was secret. Wavell was to return with me to India as Commander-in-Chief. This was a bolt from the blue and came as a considerable shock.

After refuelling at H. 4 in the desert we were rerouted to the south, as in the Cairo area there was a danger from German fighters. We passed over the deep narrow gorge where Petra lies, sighted Akaba on the Red Sea, crossed Sinai to Suez and reached Heliopolis about 5.30 p.m. Here I phoned General Sir Arthur Smith, Chief of Staff, Middle East, who had no idea that Auchinleck was arriving! The secret had been well kept! We then went to Middle East H.Q., and finally landed up at Shephard's Hotel for dinner. It was very hot and the flies and dust were bad.

Most of July 1 was spent at G.H.Q Middle East. It was an extraordinary building, previously a huge block of flats, or a Hotel. Small rooms, which inter-communicated, had been turned into offices and others which may have been bathrooms or kitchenettes gutted. It was like a cross between a Chinese puzzle box and a labyrinth. I was given a small room which contained only a deal table and chair, a pad of signal forms and a tin for waste paper. It connected with a small closet, empty, which may have been a bathroom. My recollection is that the floor was uncarpeted and the walls bare, an anchorite's cell.

General Wavell's office was, similarly small and spartan. It was entered through another small office where General Arthur Smith sat. In the communicating door a hole, some 3 inches by 2 inches, had been cut and a small mirror set in it at an angle, so that one could see Wavell at work and whether he was busy or not. An extraordinary gadget! I should have hated to be spied on in that way. But it certainly avoided knocks on the door, or unwanted intrusions.

As I was working in my allotted cell, Major General Neil Ritchie came in and enquired what I was doing. I replied, guardedly, that I was waiting to return to India and doing some liaison work in the meantime. He had just arrived to take over the appointment of Deputy Chief of Staff and could not find his way

troops in the field. He was taking over Wavell's private residence, overlooking the golf links and he obviously did not relish the prospect. He was, also, worried about his staff for it was obvious there would have to be a number of changes. Here I could not help him for only a commander can select those who will serve him best and in whom he has confidence. But I think that these long talks, in the gathering dusk, by the gently flowing Nile, may have helped him to clear his mind on many of the weighty problems with which he was now confronted. It seemed to me that he was embarking on a strange project in a strange environment which was not very friendly.

The official change of command took place at 5.0 a.m. on July 5 and that morning a conference on top level was held in a large committee room on the top storey of G.H.Q., with Auchinleck, Wavell, Arthur Smith, Air Vice-Marshal Drummond, R.A.F. and some 15 senior officers. We were joined by General Blamey, commanding the Australian forces in Middle East, who soon went to sleep and snored for the remainder of the proceedings. Plans for the future were discussed in outline. As the talks proceeded the door suddenly opened and a stout, florid officer strode in. In dead silence he took a vacant seat at the table, arranged a large pile of documents he had brought, sat back and stared round with growing astonishment on his face. Someone said quietly, "Your meeting is tomorrow in the small committee room". He hastily rose, grabbed his papers and, without a word, fled from the room. The conference then resumed.

The following day, July 6, I said good-bye to General Auchinleck. I had very mixed feelings in leaving a man I knew well, who was on the crest of the wave and transferring allegiance to another I did not know who, in spite of his great achievements, was a very disappointed man. If he felt any resentment at his supersession, he never showed it by word or deed. Both these distinguished soldiers lost the confidence of Prime Minister Churchill during their commands in Egypt. This may have been the fortune of war. Or was the real reason because they were not given the troops, weapons and armour they continually asked for to enable them to fulfil their tasks and which did not arrive until it was nearly too late? Perhaps history will decide.

At 6.0 a.m. next morning, July 7, I was at Heliopolis airfield. Our old Dakota had had a "Wash and brush up" and stood ready. With me were two of Wavell's personal staff, Wing Commander Perry-Keane and Squadron Leader Burberry (Pilot). 100 yards away the principal staff officers and others, including Admiral Cunningham, Naval C-in-C, were drawn up in line and Wavell arrived to say good-bye to each of them. It was a sad and pathetic business and I was glad when we took off at 7.0 a.m.

We reached Lydda at 9.0 a.m. to refuel and were met by Mr. Macmichael (Chief Commissioner in Palestine) and his wife, General "jumbo" Wilson and Wavell's daughter Victoria. Baghdad was reached at 11.0 a.m. and that afternoon there was a conference with General Quinan, Air Commodore Johnston and Group Captain Harris regarding airforces for Iraq and Syria. Air Vice-Marshal D'Albiac was ill with sandfly fever which, with boils and tummy upsets, was one of the occupational hazards in Baghdad in the hot weather. The following day was spent at Baghdad for there were several things to be settled, and Wavell wished to acquaint himself fully with matters in Iraq, now under his command.

We left Baghdad on July 9 for Basra where we were met by Sir John Ward, head of the Port Trust. Ward had had long experience of Iraq and was one of the most influential men in the country whose advice was sought and acted on by the Iraqi Government. It was a horrible day—not unusual at Basra—very hot and a severe dust-storm blowing. I went out with Wavell to see Indian Army troops in camps near Shaiba, including the 1st Armoured Brigade (Brigadier Aizlewood) and a battalion of 5th Gurkha Rifles. In the afternoon we had a conference with Major General C. O. Harvey commanding the Indian Division in the area.

Next day after a start at 6.0 a.m. we reached Sharjah, on the Oman Peninsula, where B.O.A.C. occupied a "Beau Geste" fort as a "night stop", for lunch. (We had to pay for it as B.O.A.C. refused to entertain us!). We took off again about noon in worsening weather and our pilot tried, somewhat foolishly I thought, to get through to Karachi non-stop. We ran into headwinds and with petrol running low had to turn back near Pasni. I was not going to break the news to Wavell, but told Perry-Keane, the air-

man, to do it. The great man was, as I anticipated, very angry! We came down at Jiwani on the Mekran coast and went to the sea-plane base there. The dust-storm was now worse. Wavell got a room in one of the houses, but the rest of us had a foul night in small tents, covered in dust, very hot and without water for a wash or both. It was most unfortunate but not unexpected. In previous years I had had the same trouble with Imperial Airways "Flying Forests" which could not make head-way against 60 knot winds. I never want to see Jiwani again.

We landed at Drigh Road (Karachi) at 9.30 a.m. on July 11, met by Sir Hugh Dow (Governor of Sindh) and Lieut-General Edward ("Reuben") Norton commanding Western Command. Thence to Ambala by air and a special train and rail motor to Simla. It had been a long, tiring but very interesting trip for which, unfortunately, I had not been sartorially prepared.

## XIX

### *1941: The Last Six Months*

THE NEW regime at G.H.Q., India required some re-orientation of ideas.

Between 1936 and 1943 I served in close contact with three Commanders-in-Chief: Cassells, Auchinleck and Wavell. They were distinguished soldiers who in character and methods differed as chalk from cheese.

Cassells, Indian Army, was a brilliant horsed-cavalry leader, who had been entirely at home when in command of India's Northern Command. But as Commander-in-Chief he had his limitations, with much routine office work and many extraneous political responsibilities. Few knew the Indian Army better, but he was irascible and not popular with everyone. He was an active soldier and the multifarious problems of office work irked him.

Auchinleck, an Indian Army infantry-man, apart from his war experience and qualities as a commander, was a first rate organiser and administrator with much experience of the workings of G.H.Q. and the Government of India, who had played a leading part in the modernisation of the army in India. He was popular with everyone—senior and junior officers alike—a quality essential if a commander is to get the best out of staffs and troops. Moreover, he had the confidence and respect of Indian officials and politicians.

Wavell, a British service officer and a great strategist and tactician, took very little interest in organisation or administration except where they affected the choice and supply of weapons and the organisation of combat formations. Originally an officer in the Black Watch, his only experience of India had been as a subaltern in the Zakka Khel operations of 1908, though he had had Indian Divisions under his command in the Western Desert and Abyssinia. He knew very little about India, its peoples and internal problems, or the workings of the Government of India and the



provincial governments. He must have found himself in a strange environment.

In manner he was laconic and somewhat reserved and, consequently, did not ingratiate himself with Indian Officers, officials, notables or politicians. Perhaps he did not understand them nor the changes which had come about since he was last in India. He was not a good conversationalist and frequently at the social functions which, as Commander-in-Chief, he was expected to attend he hardly troubled to conceal his boredom. On the few occasions when he broadcast, his delivery was poor so that what he had to say made very little impact. He had a habit in conversation, or when someone explained some matter to him, of remarking quietly, "I see". It was sometimes difficult to know what he did see though, in spite of having lost one eye in 1915, he undoubtedly saw a great deal. Indeed, he was very quick to grasp the essentials of any problem.

He had a great admiration for the Indian soldier, but it is doubtful if this extended to the Indian Army officers on his staff at G.H.Q. This may have been a legacy of the accusations of "muddle" arising out of the trials of the Mesopotamian campaign in World War I. Although he never showed it openly, there is no doubt he laboured under a sense of disappointment at his relegation to command in India. I had to work closely with him but never got to know him intimately. I always felt that I was, to some extent, a constant reminder of his removal from command in Egypt, for I had seen him in his darkest hour and accompanied him to India to take up his new post. Physically, he was stocky, very strong and very courageous as, indeed, were all his family. He was not a good rider, but this did not stop him from trying his hand at pig-sticking when the opportunity offered. His powers of endurance were remarkable, for the heat and dust of India often caused him much discomfort with his eyes. But he never complained and there were few occasions when he was indisposed. I think he was happier when Lady Wavell joined him to take over many social duties and Women's organisations. But he got away from G.H.Q. whenever he could.

By July 1941, the world situation had worsened and this had its repercussions in India. Germany's invasion of Russia on June

22 and her rapid advance in both North and South had grievously shaken morale in both Iraq and Iran, though it had removed, at any rate for the time, any Russian threat to those countries. The Turco-German pact of June 25 did not help matters and there is little doubt that Iraqis and Iranians thought they knew which side was going to win the war.

To the East, the attitude of Japan and her activities were becoming daily clearer and gravely affected the defence of India itself. Early in June my friend Herr Lovink had come to Delhi from Batavia. He had no doubt whatever of Japan's intentions and put her entry into the war as early as late September. Naturally, he was worried about the Netherlands East Indies and not at all happy about the set-up in Singapore. In July, the Japanese Cabinet fell and was succeeded by Prince Konoye and a collection of war-mongers. The German Foreign Office urged Japan to enter the war against Russia; Japan prepared to enter Indo-China; the U.S.A. and Great Britain froze Japanese assets. By the end of the month, with the approval of the French Vichy Government, Japanese warships arrived off Camranh Bay and Japanese troops landed at Saigon. In spite of disclaimers, it was obvious that Thailand was Japan's next objective and, as Thailand borders Burma, the threat to Burma and India became more serious.

In the meantime, encouraged by German successes in Russia, with adverse developments in the Middle East, the Iranian Government became definitely hostile, threatened the Southern oil-fields, the Refinery at Abadan on the Shattel-Arab and Russian interests in the area of the Caspian Sea. It was quite clear that this had to be nipped in the bud before it became uncontrollable. Plans already existed and on June 25 British and Russian forces entered Iran from south and north respectively. The Indian Division in the Basra area, with the support of naval units, crossed the Tigris and cleared the Abadan area with small opposition and, later, occupied Shahabad. The Russians entered Tabriz. By August 27 the Iranian Government had resigned, a new Government was formed under Ali Furughi and a cease fire ordered. The new regime broke off relations with Germany and Italy and on September 16 the Shah abdicated. Thus a potential danger was averted and the situation eased for the time being.

On July 22, Mr. Leo Amery, Secretary of State for India, announced certain administrative changes by which the Governor General's Council was enlarged to include further Indian members, and an All-India Defence Council was set up consisting of such leading men and Princes who would accept membership. This body was consultative and had no executive powers. It was generally regarded as a "sop to Cerberus" and a rather indifferent sop at that. It was, however, given certain information and supplied ideas on war matters. Indian political opinion was not impressed.

An instance of this came on October 6 when it was arranged that Wavell should address the Council at its opening session under the chairmanship of the Viceroy. It was visualised, however, that some members would ask questions which it might be difficult or inexpedient to answer and it was arranged that I should attend and answer such questions to avoid embarrassing Wavell. In this connection Lord Linlithgow went on record with a cynical remark: "Molesworth is capable of drawing the wool over the eyes of any gathering." When the time came Wavell decided to answer any questions himself and was badly heckled by Allah Baksh (Sindh), Jamnadas Mehta (Madras) and the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar. It was very unfortunate. Later, tours were arranged for members of the Council and these did much good.

The new situation in Europe was somewhat disastrous for our plans for army expansion. Russian troops were falling back, we had a Military Mission in Moscow and there was a demand for tanks and weapons. The tanks we had been promised for our new formations were diverted to Archangel. There was, also, a demand from Afghanistan for trucks and lorries from Indian stocks and negotiations started with this end in view. To the East the growing Japanese threat to Thailand could not be disregarded since, if it eventuated, the "Burma Road" from Rangoon to Chungking, along which American aid was sent to Chiang Kai-shek, would be liable to intensive air attack. Already plans were in preparation to give facilities for an air-lift from India over "the hump". Japanese air attacks on Chungking were stepped up in August and the plans which included new airfields in India were speeded up.

Air raid precautions were increased in cities in Eastern and Northern India, including provision of more Operations Rooms,

Observer centres, Warning systems, dispersal of petrol stocks and "Black Outs". Simulated "Blitzes" were practised to give urban populations some idea of what would be required if an actual air raid took place.

To show the people something of India's war effort, Exhibition Trains were organised, which stopped at smaller stations and attracted large crowds. In November, a Higher War School for selected officers was started near Delhi at which short courses on the Higher Direction of war were given. The possibility of American aid to India was now in the air. Already a United States Observer (Major Draper) was in New Delhi and others were expected. For the time being they did not wear uniform.

In October, petrol rationing was introduced. As a result, to conserve my own small ration (20 gallons a month) for both official and private purposes, I bought a bicycle to ride daily between my bungalow and the Secretariat. Ironically, it was marked "Made in Japan". Small change coins began to disappear and it was alleged that they were used by garages and small repair shops as washers which were now unobtainable. When one had a spare hour to play a round of golf on the Lodi Links, the *chokras* (caddies) were paid in postage stamps and these became a form of currency in the bazars though they may not have been legal tender. The stocks of imported commodities including wines and spirits began to dwindle and were replaced from Commonwealth sources, sometimes of very doubtful quality. Staple foodstuffs rose in price in urban areas, but as yet the matter had not become acute.

During all this period there were many comings and goings and on several occasions I was left at G.H.Q. to "hold the fort" while the Commander-in-Chief and the C.G.S were away on tour. This entailed, among many other activities and committees, presiding over the daily meetings of the Principal Staff Officers—known as "Morning Prayers"—all of whom were senior to me. It also meant that, in the absence of the Chief there was delay in obtaining decisions on major policy. The Principal Staff Officers murmured—indeed they almost broke into open rebellion—as well they might. They felt that they were being cold-shouldered.

As already indicated Wavell was not happy in his new appoint-

ment. It was understandable that he should want to tour in India to become acquainted with commanders and staffs and the numerous installations and training establishments all over the country. But he left much of this to the C.G.S. The Middle East seemed to draw him like a magnet.

During the whole of September, following the entry of Indian troops into Southern Iran, he was away in Iraq and also went to Cairo, returning to India early in October. Shortly afterwards he left to visit the Russian commander in Tiflis. He had, as a subaltern, been given a year's leave to study Russian and during the winter of 1916-17 was attached to Russian armies in the Caucasus, so his visit to Tiflis was useful. During this period the C.G.S. was also on tour at frequent intervals and the Viceroy's sanction had to be obtained for me to "hold the fort" at G.H.Q. during these absences. It was very difficult and unsatisfactory. In fact, something had to be done about it, as I was required to go with Wavell to Singapore in November—a trip which did not come off. There was obviously a case for a Deputy Commander-in-Chief who could relieve Wavell of many internal and routine responsibilities, and function for him when he was away from G.H.Q. Accordingly General Sir Alan Hartley was brought in from Northern Command to fill the new post. He, also, was in for a difficult time.

During November the Defence Consultative Committee met with Wavell in the chair. Its members included Sir Henry Gidney (Anglo-Indian community), Pandit Kunzru, Messrs Rahman, Kanhai, Buss, Desmukh, Jamnadas Mehta, Lalgri, Buta Singh and A. P. Patro. Various tangible matters were discussed and helpful information exchanged. A Central Civil Defence Committee was also working under the Chairmanship of Mr. Rajavendra Rau who had joined the Viceroy's expanded Council. There were about 60 members, including ministers from the provincial governments, Khizar Hayat Khan from the Punjab and Begum Shah Nawaz.

The army expansion programme and the raising of new units was becoming increasingly difficult, chiefly due to lack of British manpower and the shortage of officer material. It was becoming necessary to turn infantry into artillery, a project which had been mooted six months previously but not put into action. The situa-

tion regarding the supply of tanks was very bad and both Wavell and the Viceroy pressed the home authorities—including Prime Minister Churchill—to give us some of those going to Russia.

Towards the end of November Japanese moves in Indo-China and towards Cambodia caused further anxiety and preparations were made to increase defensive measures in Eastern India. A strong note was sent to Whitehall pointing out India's many deficiencies, particularly in anti-aircraft artillery.

On December 1, Admiral Sir Tom Phillips was appointed C-in-C Eastern Fleet and next day H.M.S. *Prince of Wales* reached Singapore. On December 7 the Japanese launched a surprise air attack on the American fleet at Pearl Harbour, with devastating effect. War was declared on the United States and Great Britain at dawn. Next day the Japanese landed in Thailand and North East Malaya; there was fierce fighting at Kota Bahru held by Indian troops and an air raid on Singapore. On the same day Hongkong was attacked by land and sea. The island fell on December 25 after holding out for 17 days.

On December 9 H.M.'s Indian Sloop *Bhadravati* was sunk by H.M.S. *Glasgow* in the Bay of Bengal. She was mistaken for a submarine, for Japanese submarines had been reported in the Bay and off Goa on the west coast. Next day came the news of the sinking of H.M.S. *Prince of Wales* and H.M.S. *Repulse* our two major warships in Eastern waters—with the loss of Admiral Phillips and 600 men. Very serious news was the loss of certain Indian air squadrons from Japanese air attack at Butterworth, near Penang. They had gone to Malaya shortly before for combined exercises with Malayan squadrons and were what we relied on for the defence of Burma. On the evening of December 12 there was a first practice Black-out at Delhi, lasting for one hour.

In the meantime Wavell, who had been to see the Viceroy at Calcutta where the latter was at Belevvedere for his traditional winter visit to that city, on his return was laid up with his only eye closed. Rumour said "shingles". Conferences on the defence of Eastern India continued daily and General Broad, commanding Eastern Command came to Delhi for consultations. At this time Air Vice-Marshal Playfair was Air Officer Commanding in India—an excellent person with whom I never had a cross word.

I have already indicated that the defence of Burma was in the hands of the War Office and that we, at G.H.Q., knew very little of their plans while the Government of Burma had been un-co-operative. On December 13 a telegram arrived from Prime Minister Churchill and the War Office telling G.H.Q. to take over control in Burma and promising us more troops and assistance. When I went to Wavell's residence with the C.G.S. to inform him, he was better but still confined to his room. During these early days of December news had to be given to the Indian public, ahead of broadcasts beamed from Berlin, with great care in the wording of communiques and the conduct of Press conferences. In all this Messrs. Alexander Inglis (Times) and Munro (Reuters) were most helpful, while Wint Hancock (Associated Press U.S.A.) handled news to America. The United States Observers, Majors Draper and Sutro, now appeared openly in uniform.

On December 15 Wavell returned to office, and I was ordered to go to Rangoon at once for "fact finding" and other matters. In the meantime General Sir Henry Pownall had been appointed to succeed Brooke-Popham at Singapore. General Percival had already succeeded General Lionel Bond as military commander in Malaya and, as he passed through India by air some months previously, I had met him at Gwalior and given him our views regarding the Indian Divisions in Malaya.

Next morning I left in our old Dakota (D.C. 2) with Squadron Leader Burberry again as pilot, taking three staff officers with me. At Calcutta after a talk with Major General Heywood commanding at Fort William I went to Belvedere and had a long talk with Lord Linlithgow. That evening Calcutta was Blacked-out—it seemed to me very successfully. The people were, however, very nervous and it was estimated that 10,000 a day were leaving the city. No news had come through from Rangoon and I wondered if they had been bombed there.

At 8.0 a.m. on December 17 I left Calcutta in the Dakota which had now had both doors sawn in half and a Lewis gun, on a swivel, mounted on each lower half. Beyond making the plane very draughty I could not see that they would be much use if we met Japanese Zeros. In that case one's parachute might provide the answer. We were not intercepted and reached Mingladon airfield

at 11.0 a.m., going into Rangoon by car. There had been no bombing to date. The rest of the day was spent in conferences, first with Major General McLeod at Burma Army H.Q. and later at Government House with Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith and some of his senior officials. In the evening I had a long talk with Major General Brett, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Air Corps, who had come down from Chungking. The Japanese were stepping up air attacks on that city and it was obvious that the Burma Road, running north from Rangoon, through Bhamo, to Chungking might be under attack within the next few hours, as well as the port of Rangoon itself. This would disrupt the flow of American aid to Chiang Kai-shek. We discussed the provision of further air bases in eastern India, capable of taking Flying Fortresses and large cargo aircraft to fly weapons, ammunition and stores "over the hump".

The American Squadron Commander Chenault, with his "Tiger" squadron had been based in Burma. The day before, he had decided that the situation was too serious for him to stay any longer, and he had taken his party north to airfields nearer Chungking. In Burma they accused him of being "windy", but what he said, in so many words, was that his contract was with Chiang Kai-shek, and the defence of Burma was nothing to do with him. Moreover he did not want to be chewed up by the superior force of Japanese Zeros operating from Thailand.

The Japanese were now well established in Thailand where adequate airfields existed. They had signed a 10 year Treaty of alliance on December 14 and had been landing troops steadily. What Sir Josiah Crosby had foretold had come to pass, and it is difficult to see what else the Thais could have done in the face of *force majeure*. I tried to find out what was being done on the Burma-Thai frontier, what steps were being taken to defend the line of the Salween river if necessary as well as the port of Moulmein and other similar operational matters. The little I discovered caused me much anxiety. Brigadier "Taffy" Davis who had been sent to join me and who afterwards became B.G.S. at Burma Army H.Q. was similarly non-plussed. In fact, at a late conference that night with the Governor and the General Officer Commanding, I said bluntly that I did not think anything was being done to meet



the serious threat and that when General Wavell arrived shortly—as I knew he would—he would want to know what was going on. My remark was received in silence.

Next day a troop convoy from India arrived off the mouth of the Irrawady river and came up to Rangoon. The Air Officer Commanding (Air Commodore Chancellor) put up fighter patrols all day but no Japanese aircraft showed up. I again saw Brett and arranged that he should stay at Rangoon until Wavell arrived and then sent off telegrams to Chungking and Delhi to that effect. After that there were many discussions on Intelligence, Censorship, Publicity, Anti-aircraft Defence and Civil Defence. That night I dined with Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith and stayed talking with him privately to a late hour. He was very co-operative and fully aware that there was much to be done and little time in which to do it. An American Lease-lend ship, the Tulsa, had reached Rangoon full of stores for Chiang Kai-shek. We decided to "sequester" it. On a query as to who was to pay, I replied that as long as he took anything or everything which was wanted the question of payment could be left to the financial pundits when, if ever, the war was over, by which time the incident might have been forgotten. There was no bombing again that night!

On December 19 I left in our Dakota reaching Akyab to refuel at 11.0 a.m. The airfield—a particularly nasty strip near the shore—had been obstructed and two Blenheim bombers arrived while we were there. We then flew down the "Observer Line" to Chittagong where I stopped for a short time to look at their Observer and Warning lay-out, reaching Calcutta about 2.0 p.m. Wavell with Air Vice-Marshal Playfair arrived at 5.0 p.m. and later General Pownall arrived *en route* to take over at Singapore, as well as Sir Henry Craik, Governor of the Punjab, with several troubles to be resolved. After a series of discussions I dined at Belvedere, saw the Viceroy at 11.45 p.m. and we talked till 12.30 a.m. He was in very good spirits and not worried at the developments in the situation. Previously I had given my preliminary report to Wavell who had been to see an oculist.

Next day I was at Belvedere at 9.0 a.m. and all the morning in conference with Wavell, Pownall and Playfair which was attended by Gilbert Laithwaite. In the afternoon the Viceroy joined us and

we discussed future policy. Later I saw the Viceroy and Wavell alone and we considered possible names for a new commander in Burma. Wavell deferred final selection until he had been to Burma and seen things for himself.

Next morning, December 21, Wavell left in our Dakota for Rangoon, while Playfair and I went back to Delhi in a Lockheed. Next day Wavell telegraphed his appreciation of the situation in Burma, which I was relieved to see corresponded with mine, which I had given him verbally at Calcutta. He also selected Lieutenant-General T. J. Hutton, then C.G.S. India, to replace Major General McLeod as G.O.C. Burma. Wavell had then left with General Brett for Chungking. Later the War Office agreed to the appointment and that I should act as C.G.S. till a new one was appointed.

On the morning of December 22 Rangoon was bombed for the first time. At Delhi there were conferences with Admiral Fitzherbert and Royal Indian Navy officers on the naval situation and the defence of Indian ports. All cable communication with Malaya, which ran through Penang, was at an end. The Japanese had got there.

The remaining days of December were depressing and full of hard work. News came in from Malaya that Brooke-Popham had relieved the commander of the 9th Indian Division, in north Malaya, and two of his Brigade Commanders of their commands. No reasons were given. Northern Malaya must have been overrun and, as already mentioned, Major General Murray Lyon had told me of his apprehensions in not being allowed to construct defences on the Malaya-Thailand frontier. General Hutton left for Burma on December 26 and Wavell returned to New Delhi the next day. He had had a narrow escape at Mingladon airfield near Rangoon when, on landing there, Japanese planes attacked with *bombs and machine-guns and he had to run for cover to a ditch.*

The question of a new C.G.S. had to be considered and there was a possibility that Major General Slim might be brought back from Syria to fill the post. But on December 30 a telegram arrived from London appointing Wavell, Supreme Commander in the Far East, an appointment approved by both Prime Minister Churchill

as it went, as he was very able and level-headed, and well liked.

While this was in progress the Viceroy produced a crazy scheme for removing all the factories out of Calcutta, to goodness knows where, as part of the "scorched earth" scheme. Much valuable time was spent in preparing a detailed note deprecating the suggestion, mainly on the grounds that the factories were turning out badly needed material and that disruption of this for an unforeseeable time would have disastrous results. There were, also, other considerations as to sites, building, communications and labour. At the same time arrangements, including the provision of additional airfields with long runways, had to be made for the reception of large American aircraft required for the defence of Burma as well as for the "China lift". Hurricanes began to arrive later.

On January 2 a long telegram came in from Whitehall regarding the reorganisation of Middle East Command in view of the changes in the overall situation, following on the establishment of Wavell's *South-west Pacific Command* and the appointment of General Chiang Kai-shek to command forces in the China-Thailand-Indo-China area. The land forces under G.H.Q., India in Iraq and Iran were to be transferred to General Auchinleck, C-in-C Middle East. To the uninitiated this might seem merely the signing of a few bits of paper. Actually it necessitated a great volume of work, involving liaison, co-ordination, intelligence; political considerations, supply, maintenance, medical and transportation problems. There also was, in the east, much to be done about Chiang Kai-shek's new command, particularly as regards what was known as "204 Mission" to Chungking and supply and maintenance.

The Americans were by now deeply committed in the Philippines, but American aid to India began to materialise and the U.S. Liaison Officer, Major Draper and his staff, were very busy at Delhi. On January 9 Major General Wheeler and Colonel Bullitt, U.S.A., arrived. Wheeler had a ship loaded with heavy machinery and materials of all kinds. He was a most dynamic person, a railway engineer from El Paso. He was most concerned about the inadequacies at the Port of Basrah—which we were well aware of—and feared a breakdown and another scandal. He also advocated setting up a major American Aid base at Karachi, which was to come into being later. All these matters entailed a great deal of

work and discussions, and were made more difficult as we had still no C-in-C and no Chief of Staff! On January 13, in reply to a private query, the War Office indicated that the Viceroy had been told the name of the new C-in-C on January 11 and, in spite of our urgent requests, had kept it to himself! It was not until January 16 that General Sir Alan Hartley was appointed and at the same time Lieutenant-General Edward Morris (British Service) was nominated as Chief of Staff.

The same day Sir Stafford Cripps retired, at his own request, as Ambassador to Moscow and was to be replaced by Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, then Ambassador at Chungking, who was to be succeeded by Sir Horace Seymour. These moves, later, were to have their repercussions on India.

The situation in the east was deteriorating fast. On January 10 the Japanese started to invade the Netherlands East Indies, attacking the oil installations at Tarakan, off Dutch Borneo. In Malaya, Wavell reported that, on the same day, he was withdrawing to Johore and might have difficulty in holding Singapore. It would be a race between the Japanese and further reinforcements. On January 18 the Japanese took Tavoy in south Burma and on January 21 attacked Moulmein. Two days later Wavell flew to see General Hutton at Rangoon. Arrangements were made to send another Indian Infantry Brigade to Burma, to be followed by three British battalions towards the end of January. Reports from Burma alternated between good and bad from one day to the next, but after fierce fighting around Moulmein our troops had to withdraw northwards on January 30. By this time our forces in Malaya were back in Singapore Island and had destroyed the causeway over the Johore strait. Meanwhile things had not been going well to the west in Libya. It had been a hectic month.

For sometime the officer situation had been growing acute, particularly as regards trained staff officers for numerous new formations in Malaya, Iraq and Iran and to replace inevitable wastage. We now had further calls for staffs for Burma and for the forces being built up for the defence of eastern India. The short staff courses which had been running for some time could produce neither the quality nor quantity now required, and we were, literally, scraping the bottom of the barrel. Meanwhile plans went ahead

for a "scorched earth" scheme for eastern India as well as arrangements for local naval defence in the Bay of Bengal, though the means for providing the latter were lamentably small.

Early in February General Chiang Kai-shek intimated that he wished to visit India to discuss various military requirements. Arrangements were put in hand to receive him, including a parade of troops for his benefit. He arrived by air on February 9, with Madame Chiang and several assistants and was given a house on the Viceregal estate. That day, as officiating Chief of Staff, I had to give the opening address to the Army Commanders' Conference—which could not be postponed—and then leave to take the salute at the rehearsal for the parade on Kingsway. We had collected some nine battalions with auxiliary troops and they made a fine show as they went past in column of route. I wrote in my diary: "That is the last time I shall ever take the salute of a Division". I was right!

Early on February 10 I went to see the Viceroy and found that he had gone to pay a courtesy call on Chiang. He returned shortly, very disgruntled, and said that Pandit Nehru had forestalled him! Bad Staff work! He was evidently having trouble with Prime Minister Churchill and the Secretary of State over the scope of the discussions with the Chinese. Later I went with General Hartley to pay an official call on Chiang and we had a twenty-minute talk with him. I was impressed by the Generalissimo. We did not meet Madame Chiang who had gone off in a private car to see Pandit Nehru.

Chiang spoke no English—though his wife spoke American—and preferred to use a provincial dialect, I think that of Chekiang. His chief interpreter was a tall man named Hollington Tong, Vice-Minister of Information. I saw him looking fixedly at me and when General Hartley took his leave he detained me.

"We have met somewhere before I think?" I wracked my memory and then had an idea. "Was it not in Peking when you were on the staff of the *Peking Daily News* in 1912?" "Ah," he said, "I remember. You came over and helped us the night we were bombed?" That was it! I had been a minor contributor from time to time when copy was short. I now had a firm friend in the Chinese camp which was of the greatest value to me later.

That afternoon General Shang-chen (Adjutant General), General Chou Chi-chow (Director National Aviation Commission) and Major General Fisher Hou (Commanding 5th Army) came to my house to call and we talked very amicably—with some lubrication—for two hours. Later there was a State Banquet for the visitors at Viceroy's House with suitable speeches from the Viceroy and the Generalissimo. The Viceregal gold plate was used and some 60 senior officials and their wives were guests. Lord and Lady Linlithgow were both very tall—well over 6 feet—while the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang were tiny people. As they walked round together shaking hands with the guests before dinner the contrast between the two pairs was remarkable.

Next morning the parade went off very well and later we showed the Generalissimo a Valentine tank, which impressed him. He then told me he wished to visit the North-west Frontier and see the Khaibar Pass. Later I had a discussion with Sir Archibald Clark Kerr (later Lord Inverclyde) and the Chinese Generals on the preliminary agenda for our discussions.

Chiang's trip to the Khaibar, by air and road, was fixed for February 13. The previous day the Chinese Generals came to lunch with me and in the afternoon our discussions began at Chiang's house, Sir Archibald and Mr. (later Sir) Olaf Caroe, Foreign Secretary, being present. Next morning I was down at the airport at 6.0 a.m. and met Air Marshal Playfair, A.O.C. It was overcast and drizzling, the cloud table was very low and the weather over Peshawar was bad. Playfair said he would not take responsibility for allowing Chiang's plane to take off. I suggested that he should go and tell Chiang at once. He refused point blank. I got him to agree to a postponement only, in case the weather should improve and then went off to Chiang's house.

Hearing me talking to Hollington Tong, he came out onto the raised verandah in his Chinese sleeping robe and having heard what I had to say was extremely angry. Had I been in China I should have been decapitated forthwith. He wanted to abandon the trip altogether but I persuaded him to wait till 9.0 a.m. to see what could be done. I then dug out Sir Archibald, who implored me to make some arrangements, as, if the trip was cancelled, Chiang would think we had some sinister reason for it. By this

time the weather was a little better at Delhi and Playfair reported that the plane could go as far as Rawalpindi, but no further. I then had to phone Rawalpindi to lay on a motorcade to Peshawar and to Sir George Cunningham, Governor, North-west Frontier Province, to lay on suitable arrangements for the Khaibar in view of the change of plans. The Viceroy and the C-in-C had to be informed of the changes and finally, breakfast-less and nearly dead, I collected Chiang and his merry men at 9.30 a.m., took them to the airport and, with a sigh of relief, saw them airborne. Meanwhile Madame Chiang had gone off to stay with Pandit Nehru in Central India—a visit which we regarded with some suspicion.

When Chiang returned to Delhi airport on the afternoon of February 14, he was all smiles and very pleased with his trip. I thought it a favourable opportunity to hand him an aide-memoire I had prepared on the talks to date. Next morning (Sunday) I went with the C-in-C to Chiang's house and we had a discussion lasting 2 hours. This was followed in the afternoon by a long meeting with the Generals, after which they and Chiang agreed to my aide-memoire *in toto* and General Shang-chen gave me the confirmation in writing.

This meeting, as well as the others, were held in the Dining Room of Chiang's house, where there was a large table. A door communicated with the Drawing Room, where Chiang sat. This was left open and I noticed that Madame Chiang had drawn a chair close to it and was listening to our deliberations. I was not very happy about this eaves-dropping. Chiang and his staff left by air on February 16 for Calcutta. At 9.0 a.m. he came to the C-in-C's house to say good-bye and gave General Hartley and myself, using a large wall map, a 30 minute lecture on Far East strategy. His views were most interesting, though I could not agree with some of them. He then presented each of us with a signed photograph of himself, a large one for the Chief, a smaller one for me. He left Delhi in very good heart and his staff made many expressions of appreciation and good-will, which I think were quite genuine. I found General Shang Chen a charming person and, later, corresponded with him.

At Calcutta, Chiang met Mr. Mohamed Ali Jinnah and Mr. Gandhi. When he left he broadcast a message to the peoples of

India advocating co-operation in the war against Japan. That was very good. But he went on to express sympathy with their wish for "real political power". This was quite unnecessary for him to comment on and in it I saw the hand of Madame Chiang and her visits to Pandit Nehru. The internal situation was bad enough with growing signs of non-co-operation and broadcasts by Subhas Chandra Bose from Berlin on "India's desire for freedom and readiness to co-operate with Germany", without Chiang sticking his oar in.

Before Sir Archibald Clark Kerr left I had a talk with him and Sir Horace Seymour who was on his way through as Ambassador to Chungking. To my horror they said they had a plot to send me on a mission to China. Fortunately nothing came of this. When he left, Sir Archibald sent me a letter in which he wrote, "You are certainly 'tops' with the Chinese, a rare gift upon which I would venture to offer congratulations." I do not think he knew I had been two years in North China, nor the million to one chance which produced a friend in Chiang's entourage, which made all the difference in somewhat delicate negotiations.

By this time General Morris had arrived to take over the appointment as Chief of Staff. It was with some relief that I vacated my officiating appointment, reverted to my substantive rank and could get on with my normal duties.

Externally things were bad. Singapore fell on February 15. In Burma our troops fell back to the line of the Bilin river. The Japanese had seized Palembang in Sumatra and taken the island of Bali, south of Java. A press conference was necessary, followed by a broadcast to bring home to India that the war was now at her doors. On February 23, control in Burma was re-transferred to the India Command and the situation there was very obscure.

The next day came news that Wavell would return to India again to take over as C-in-C. Order—Counter-order—Disorder! These changes were extremely upsetting. He actually reached Delhi on February 27, very tired and worried about Burma. During the evacuation of Singapore, he had stepped over the edge of a quay in the darkness and fallen several feet into a lighter. This had bruised and shaken him badly. I tried to persuade him to rest for a few days and let me go to Burma to find out what was going



on there, but he decided to go to Calcutta with General Brereton, U.S.A. In the meantime something had to be done about General Hartley, who was out of a job! The trouble was that Wavell seldom really functioned as C-in-C at his headquarters—he was always away at some area where fighting was going on. Thus the essential vital duties of a C-in-C in India were neglected and his principal staff officers got no clear directions. Ultimately it was arranged that General Hartley should become "additional C-in-C" to relieve Wavell of many internal matters and other duties. All this coming and going, however, was the result of orders from Whitehall and may have illustrated the confusion of mind of those responsible for the Higher Direction of War when faced by the difficult situation in north Africa and the Japanese attack in the east, together with other unpleasant situations in Europe and Russia.

On March 2, Lieutenant-General (later Field Marshal, Earl) Sir Harold Alexander reached Delhi on his way to take over command in Burma and was put into the picture as we saw it. The same day the question arose as to whether to evacuate the Andaman Islands—capital Port Blair—in the Bay of Bengal. It was obvious that we had nothing to prevent Japanese warships infiltrating into the Bay.

The first half of March was occupied by re-organising the four Commands in India to meet the threat from the east which was now upon us. The east coast of India was particularly vulnerable. Matters affecting communications with Chungking were pressed on. General Alexander took over command in Burma, where the Governor had already left Rangoon and all Lower Burma was under martial law. The loss of Rangoon could not be long delayed. On March 12 the small British garrison was withdrawn from Port Blair and the Japanese occupied the Andamans on March 23. *I was very sorry for the Chief Commissioner who was left at his post. He was badly treated by the Japanese.*

Following the loss of Singapore—apart from Wavell—jobs had to be found for senior commanders. Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton was placed in command in Ceylon, with General Sir Henry Pownall under him to command the troops there. The latter had few troops, the former fewer ships. Plans for "scorched earth" in eastern

India and for the protection of east coast ports were speeded up, but the weapons available for defence were lamentably few. Calls from Malaya and Burma had already depleted most stocks and there were only about 12 anti-aircraft guns remaining. So bad was it that, near Madras and Vizagapatam, palm trees were cut down and the trunks stuck up at an angle of 45 degrees in the hope that Japanese planes would mistake them for defences. Rumbblings began in upper Sind owing to the activities of the Farki Hurs, led by the notorious Pir of Pagaro. In Delhi and other large cities "meat-less days" were ordered and, with many others, I gave up smoking. With memories of World War I, I was glad we were not reduced to Plum and Apple Jam.

In view of the situation I was asked to give a talk to the Delhi Rotary Club, to which a number of leading Indian citizens belonged. It was to be a private talk, "off the record", on "Retrospect and Prospect", following a dinner at the Imperial Hotel. Next day I was horrified to see a garbled version, with quotations out of context, in the *Statesman*. Later, Devadas Gandhi attacked me in *Harijan*. The hand was the hand of Devadas, but the voice was that of the Mahatma. I was castigated but, like the small boy who pads his trousers with a stout exercise book, the strokes of the pen caused me little discomfort. It was a bad "let down" and the only time my confidence was betrayed.

Unfortunately the disclosure caused a considerable stir in eastern India, though in some ways it brought matters home to many people. As a result I was asked to dine by the Maharajah of Patiala to meet Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan (Premier Punjab), Mr. Sultan Ahmad (Law Member), Messrs. Ramasami Ayer, Chattari (Hyderabad), the Nawab of Bhopal, Mr. Inglis (*Times*) and other leading journalists. I knew most of them personally and could discuss the situation frankly, with no fear that what I said—not really very much—would be definitely "off the record".

Towards the end of March, Lieutenant-Colonel Toogood, Military Secretary to the Viceroy, came to see me. He was very disturbed at the growing criticisms in the Press and elsewhere directed personally against Lord Linlithgow on the grounds of expense in war-time on entertainments and Viceregal functions, such as garden parties at Delhi, Simla and Calcutta, official dinner parties

and so forth. The matter of the move of the Viceregal Bodyguard to Calcutta for the winter season was cited and, to make matters worse, a question had been asked by Mr. Milner (Labour) in the House of Commons, and the Secretary of State had promised to make enquiries. I hastened to say that all this was none of my business and I was not going to stick my nose into it. But Toogood thought that as I was a friend of Lord Linlithgow and had some influence with the Press I might be able to fix up some counter-propaganda.

It is a fierce light which beats upon the throne. I well remembered a similar situation during World War I, which focused on the retention by the then Viceroy of a German Bandmaster with the Viceregal Band. It was a very long time before the Viceroy would allow him to be interned. It is, of course, necessary for a Viceroy, as representative of the Monarch, to maintain a considerable state. This has always been expected and accepted in India, and custom dies hard. He has to entertain princes, officials, nobles, political leaders, industrialists and many leading citizens in various walks of life, and the number of Indians who accepted and respected this hospitality greatly out-numbered the British. While there might be criticisms of all this from certain interested and possibly hostile quarters, there were very many who would see in its curtailment an air of defeatism which might have unfortunate results. I could only suggest that the whole question should be put squarely before the Viceroy and Lady Linlithgow—who was very active with women's organisations and war work—and let them decide what to do. It seemed to me that the lights were beginning to flicker on Olympus!

A few days later, to my surprise, I had a letter from Lady Linlithgow. Although she seemed to think I had been meddling—which was not the case—she said that the question of propaganda for the Viceroy was being taken up by Sir Evelyn Wrench, who was then in Delhi.

By March 22, Wavell was back again in Delhi. Previously, on March 11, Prime Minister Churchill had made a statement on constitutional changes for India, had promised to present them to Indian political leaders before publication and had appointed Sir Stafford Cripps to go to Delhi as negotiator and to consult

with the Viceroy and the C-in-C. Cripps arrived at Karachi by air on March 22.

Next day, at noon, I went to the airport to meet him on behalf of the C-in-C. The Viceroy, the Air Officer Commanding and various Government Departments were also represented. The plane was late and I went to the airport building to wait. There was a large gathering of the Press and camera-men, most of whom I knew. One Pressman said to me, "What do you think will be the outcome of these negotiations?" I replied, "Your guess is as good as mine." "Ah," he said, "they will be a flop!" I made no reply. When Sir Stafford arrived he rapidly shook hands with us, brushed the Pressmen aside and went off by car to Viceroy's House. Later a statement on his mission was issued.

Between March 24 and April 12 the constitutional discussions continued. They did not bother me except when the crucial question of defence cropped up, when I had to supply Wavell with memoranda. The general opinion in official circles was that a deadlock would be reached. Many thought that Cripps' leftist views—he had once been expelled from the Labour Party for them—and his activities in industrial areas in Britain had become embarrassing to Prime Minister Churchill, who had sent him on a hopeless task to India to meet his political Waterloo. On March 29 he held a Press Conference at which he was severely heckled. Next day he broadcast to the peoples of India and wanted to follow this by a broadcast to the Indian Army, which was sternly turned down.

It now appeared that the negotiations were beginning to collapse and those who hoped they would, joyfully plagiarised the title of a film, popular at that time, with the slogan "Good-bye Mr. Cripps! In this I think Sir Stafford's personal unpopularity played a considerable part. The stumbling block was obviously Defence and on April 2 I wrote: "Cripps is trying to sell the fort, I hope they won't let him".

☞ On April 4 I was summoned urgently to see Wavell regarding a proposal by Cripps that Wavell should meet and talk to the Indian leaders—Abul Kalam Azad, President of Congress, and Pandit Nehru. I suggested that the meeting should take place in Wavell's large office in the Secretariat building and should begin

with tea, which would serve to create a favourable atmosphere for discussions. Arrangements were made accordingly for that afternoon.

My office was directly above the north entrance to the south Secretariat building and at 4.0 p.m. I was looking out of the window onto the broad, sunlit approach to Viceroy's House. Two cars drew up. Out of the first came the two Indian leaders; out of the second, Sir Stafford. Sir Stafford was very tall; the Indian leaders, standing side by side, were short. Sir Stafford towered over them and stood for a few minutes talking to them and wagging a long finger at them. They looked like two little boys who had been caught committing some naughtiness. Then Sir Stafford led the way to the entrance where they were met by an A.D.C., brought upstairs and along the open corridor to Wavell's room. I followed along behind the procession.

There were one or two people present for tea, including Mr. Charles Ogilvie, Secretary, Defence Department. I sat next to Abul Kalam Azad to entertain him, as he did not speak English. Wavell took the head of the table. It was a nice tea and Abul Kalam Azad talked with interest on mutual memories of Cairo. I was also on hand to translate, if the Congress President should wish to join in the discussions and to take notes on what transpired.

When tea was cleared away, Wavell asked the Indian leaders to open proceedings, and Pandit Nehru spoke for some time. Briefly he wanted the Defence Member of Council to be an Indian in place of the Commander-in-Chief, who would become an executive adviser. He was asking for 100 per cent on Defence. When he had finished I imagined that some discussion and, perhaps, bargaining would take place: Wavell perhaps offering something, Nehru conceding something until some sort of compromise might be reached to form the basis of further discussions at a higher level. How far Wavell would go I did not know. To my intense astonishment Wavell said, "If that is your case there is nothing more to be said." There was dead silence. After a pause Wavell stood up and the Indian leaders rose to take their leave.

In war-time, with the enemy at the gate, it was quite impossible to play tricks with the responsibility for the defence of India. But I never expected the door to be slammed. It would be quite un-

thinkable, at that time, for a politician, of a particular religion, with far-reaching political aspirations to take over defence responsibilities. The Indian Army had always been kept free from politics. Their allegiance was not to the nebulous jelly-fish represented by the Government of India, but to the Crown, whether the Monarch was Emperor, or Empress of India, or head of the Commonwealth of Nations and no tampering with that ideal could be tolerated. Again, since Moghul times, the saying that "He who holds the army holds India", has held true and probably holds true now when India is a Republic. There could be no loosening of the reins in war. On the other hand it seemed a pity to break off all constitutional progress, which would have to come eventually, on that one point at a period of exceptional danger. There might, possibly, have been some concessions—even if they carried no real power—and the time factor might have been considered. At any rate to close the door meant an increase of non-co-operation and hostility at a time when the very opposite was required. Whatever the die-hards may have thought, my own view was that something might have been conceded without any real danger and thus enlisted support.

Did Wavell close the door on his own initiative? Or was he carrying out instructions already received? I never heard him give any explanation. Or were the Indian leaders determined to have everything or nothing and had given this answer elsewhere? If so what could have been the object of the meeting? They must surely have known, or expected, some sort of compromise? Perhaps future historians will find the answer.

When the Indian leaders left, their car had not arrived and they came into my office to wait. Pandit Nehru told me he had been in the Officers Training Corps at Cambridge and remarked that he would like to do something for the Indian Army. The car arrived and I went down to see them into it. Later I thought over what he had said and had an idea. I knew he was staying with Mr. G. D. Birla, the industrialist, at his mansion on Kingsway and I telephoned and asked to speak to him. I then offered him an appointment in my own department if, as he had said, he wished to help. I heard his gasp at the other end of the phone as he replied that his political duties would not permit him to accept. I was

very disappointed as his help to me would have been priceless. I think he was referring to financial assistance.

On April 2, two days before this meeting with Wavell, Congress had objected to the British proposals on three grounds—defence, right of secession and representation in government. On April 10 Congress rejected the proposals and Cripps announced that they had been withdrawn. That was that and it did not make things any easier in India.

*Summer and Autumn 1942*

APRIL STARTED badly. The Japanese threat to the East coast ports and Ceylon began to materialise. A naval force was reported approaching Colombo on the evening of April 4. Next morning Japanese sea-based aircraft attacked the town. Not much damage was done and it was claimed that at least 25 planes had been shot down.

On April 6 reports came in of several of our merchantmen sunk in the Bay of Bengal, and the ports of Cocanada and Vizagapatam were bombed. This news was followed shortly by the sinking of H.M.S. Dorsetshire and Cornwall by torpedo-bombers south of Colombo, with much loss of life. On April 10 Trincomalee in Ceylon was bombed and our Eastern fleet was reported to be withdrawing westwards towards Africa. We seemed to be left with no ships and few aircraft! On April 13 Admiral Somerville was appointed C-in-C Eastern Fleet and Wavell flew to Bombay to confer with him. The Japanese fleet withdrew to Singapore to prepare for the next attack.

The Government of India did not move up to Simla for the hot weather as had been the custom previously, but stayed to work in New Delhi. This raised a number of problems for provision of suitable hot weather accommodation for clerical staff, who lived in quarters and hostels in Old Delhi, as well as further suitable office space in the South Secretariat building which was becoming very congested with additional staffs as well as Americans and Chinese.

Very soon, as the weather became hotter, it became apparent that whoever designed the bungalows and offices in New Delhi had never expected them to be occupied in the summer. They were cold weather structures, very airy, while in hot weather in India the main consideration is to keep the hot air and dust out and only open up bungalows and offices in late evening until



early morning. The bungalows were built of thin brick with somewhat shallow verandahs which did not give all-round protection. The roofs were flat and many of them leaked in the winter rains. In the hot weather the bungalows became furnaces. Layers of bricks had to be laid on the roofs to try to keep out heat from the direct rays of the sun. The woodwork of windows and doors shrank in the dry heat, let in dust and swelled and stuck when the monsoon rains started. Air-conditioning, though well established in Indian ports, was unknown in Delhi which, in normal times, was almost deserted in summer. A small number of such plants was obtained and I was fortunate to be allotted one for my bedroom. It reduced night temperature from some 105 degrees, to around 90 degrees Fahrenheit and allowed me to get some sleep at night after a working day of 16 hours.

The Viceroy's study (and possibly other rooms in Viceroy's House) was air-conditioned and well supplied with fans. When I went to see him in the hot weather, wearing only a bush shirt, shorts and stockings, the transition from 118 degrees outside to 85 degrees in his study made me shiver! On several occasions he solicitously asked me if I had fever! We had no air-conditioning in our offices in the South Secretariat and in the afternoons the sun poured into the open "wells" and could not be kept out. The building had no verandahs and the sun struck straight on office walls. The smaller offices below the flat roof became unbearably hot. All this did not improve the efficiency of officers or clerks and there was a good deal of sickness.

During April and May the Japanese pushed forward from Thailand into southern Burma and it became obvious we could not hold on there much longer. By April 17 the oil-field at Yenangyaung, in south Burma, had been put out of action to prevent use by the Japanese. Further north Japanese and Chinese clashed at Taunggyi and on April 29 the Burma-China road was cut by the loss of Lashio. Withdrawing British forces began to reach the Assam border by May 15. General "Vinegar Joe" Stillwell (U.S. Adviser to Chiang Kai-shek) arrived in New Delhi on May 24, after a 20 days walk through tracks in the Burmese jungles. Major General Alexander arrived soon after. Asked about his experience, the latter replied: "I had never run so fast so far in my

life!" Difficulties now arose in Assam over local administration and communications, for minor Government officials and staff of the Post and Telegraph Department were quitting their posts and many local inhabitants were fleeing to Bengal. The whole eastern area was now under Eastern Army and the question of having to introduce Martial Law in that area was considered.

The pressing developments in the overall situation threw a great deal of additional work on General Headquarters in New Delhi. Already extra staff had been provided, but there were innumerable problems connected with the war in which the General Staff was closely concerned, both with policy and co-ordination. Departmental and inter-Departmental committees sprang up to consider and progress many matters which now arose. Among these were The War Council, the Principal Staff Officers committee, The Denial (Scorched earth) committee, the War Resources committee, the Co-ordination committee, a small committee known as the "Star Chamber" dealing with the internal situation, the Defence Consultative committee and several others I have now forgotten. I found myself going from one to another, either as a member, or chairman. Apart from all this there was co-ordination with the Royal Indian Navy, liaison with American and Chinese Missions, Internal Security, North-West Frontier affairs and policy matters affecting Middle East Command. One Deputy Chief of Staff could not deal with all this as well as with the requirements of Eastern Army. Therefore, in June, Major General Winterton (British Service) was appointed D.C.G.S. (O), to take over Eastern operations and Intelligence. From then on I was left to deal with matters within India, the N.W.-Frontier and Middle East.

American bombers and fighters were now beginning to arrive from the west in greater numbers and the provision of additional airfields, with adequate runways, particularly in Eastern India, became acute. An Aerodrome Construction Committee was set up to progress this work. As policy had to be settled and inter-departmental views co-ordinated the General Staff had to take this over. Among other matters were selection of sites, size of runways and other facilities, availability of staffs and labour for construction, payment for land requisitioned, compensation for people and whole villages which had to be moved and re-settled. The essential co-

ordination with Provincial Governments and their local officials took time when little time was available and the Finance Member of Council had to be given some estimate of cost of each project and some idea as to which Government the bill should finally be sent.

In spite of all that was done, by all concerned, to avoid delays, the wheels turned slowly and the Committee came in for harsh criticism from many quarters. The R.A.F., in particular, wanted a "blank cheque" and were very annoyed when this was refused. Estimates had to be made and were not meticulously scrutinised in detail unless it appeared that they obviously erred one way or the other. But no Government can give anyone a "blank cheque" for any purpose either in peace or war. Public expenditure of money has to be controlled, otherwise the Government is divesting itself of one of its major responsibilities and, virtually, ceasing to govern. In wartime some officers tend to forget this, mainly because they have never learned how government functions and, consequently, rage against what they consider unnecessary "red tape" and obstruction. Thus we had many difficulties to contend with.

About the second week of June, H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester came to Delhi. I never discovered the purpose of his visit. He stayed at Viceroy's House and one morning, as I was waiting in the A.D.C.'s anteroom before going in to see Lord Linlithgow, he came in, clad only in a bath-towel and bearing a "schooner" of some iced lemon drink. He was very hot, for he had been playing squash. It was a very hot day and I was glad to accept and join him in a smaller glass of lemonade.

On June 14, at 7.0 a.m. there was a parade in the forecourt of Viceroy's House to mark United Nations Day. The Viceroy was present and the Duke took the salute of the detachments as they marched past. We had raked up some British and Indian Infantry; there was the Viceroy's Body-guard and detachments of Dutch, American and Chinese troops. It was very hot and a dust-storm was blowing. After it was all over Mr. U. N. Sen of Associated Press of India came up to talk to me. I asked him which of the various detachments had impressed him most. He replied, "The Americans." The latter, about 40 strong, had marched six abreast

in a small compact group, armed only with pistols. I asked why he specially favoured them. He replied, quite seriously, "They wear Gandhi caps and look so non-violent!"

During June and July things were going very badly in the Western Desert. Tobruk fell and by July 1 Rommell had reached El Alamain. In India the situation had been stabilised on the Assam border, but Akyab, on the coast, had been lost. In the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal it seemed that the Japanese were preparing for an assault on East coast ports. All these developments were, no doubt, observed by the Congress party which may well have thought that the time was ripe to strike a blow for independence. Their activities did not escape notice by the Central Police Intelligence Bureau, then under Mr. Pilditch, which gave day-to-day information of what was going on, while the Frontier Intelligence Bureau at Peshawar was in close touch with western tribal affairs. In all great political organisations there are always some people who either lack the courage of their convictions, or wish to have a foot in both camps if plans should go astray. Moreover, the bigger the organisation, the more difficult it is to keep plans secret.

Towards the end of June, Mr. Louis Fischer, an American journalist, came to India to examine the political situation with, I think, the idea of writing a book about it. He went first to talk with Congress leaders and visited Mr. Gandhi at his Ashram. He then came to New Delhi and asked for an interview with the Viceroy. The latter did not wish to see him and, as he had brought a letter of introduction to me from John Gunter, I was asked to talk to him instead. He came to see me at my house on two occasions staying for about two hours on each. He wore those very flamboyant American shirts ("coats of many checks and colours") worn outside the trousers. These garments were new to us in India and when I first saw Fischer I was thoroughly startled. I think Lord Linlithgow must have had prior information about this form of dress and quailed at the thought of receiving such an apparition.

Fischer was very friendly and a "live wire" after the manner of American reporters. He had, however, been fully indoctrinated with Congress propaganda and ideologies and I had to explain that there was another side to the picture. He asked many ques-

tions about "non-violent agitation" and *satyagraha* and how Government would deal with such activities, including *hartals* and non-co-operation. I explained that Government would not allow subversive activities, tampering with the loyalty of the police or the army and that if there was any danger to law and order, people's lives or property, they would undoubtedly take action and use force, including military force, should it become necessary. His reaction was, "You horrify me!" I pointed out that the preservation of order was the responsibility of every Government, and for this purpose State Militias and Federal troops had, in the past, been used in the United States. He then asked me what action would be taken against political leaders in the event of disturbances arising from political agitations. I dismissed this as a hypothetical question which could not be answered until such an occasion arose. It was not until later that I began to suspect that someone had put this question into his mouth in the hope of getting a clear answer. Fischer duly published his book, in which I received an honourable mention because, I "rode a bicycle to office, instead of using petrol for my car!"

On July 2, I was surprised to receive an invitation to tea from Mr. G. D. Birla, whom I had not met. Mr. Birla was a very wealthy Indian industrialist who was known to be a close adviser of Mr. Gandhi and to supply many of the financial "sinews of war" to the Congress party. I had to obtain the Viceroy's permission before accepting and was told to "keep my eyes skinned". (I might have added "and fingers crossed".) I duly went to his large and imposing mansion on Kingsway. It had a great central hall out of which a wide oak staircase rose and was furnished in English style with several antique pieces. Tea was served on a silver tea service with china and other accessories which would have put many a "stately home" to shame.

Mr. Birla was short and stocky, clad in white Congress "uniform" of home-spun cloth, very courteous, speaking perfect English. He was a most interesting and well-informed person. When tea was over I had to listen to a long dissertation on political ideologies and aspirations and the increasing dangers of the time. It was clear to me that I was intended (although this was never mentioned) to convey a warning to the Viceroy. Finally, he asked me

the same question which had been put to me by Louis Fischer. What would happen to the Congress leaders if there should be political disturbances in the future? I gave the same answer as before. He pressed me further, but I would not go beyond saying that the question was hypothetical. It was obvious that he was hinting that a storm was brewing, as we suspected, and his talk to me confirmed our suspicions. The only question was: When will the storm break? Our talk was very friendly and we parted with expressions of cordiality on both sides.

Ten days later, July 14, Bastille day in Paris, the Congress Working Committee showed its hand. It published a resolution proposing the withdrawal of British rule from India and threatening a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale to attain this end. This resolution would require confirmation and ratification by Congress at a full session. It was obviously designed to embarrass Government and disrupt the Allied war effort at a time when a Japanese invasion of India from the east was threatened and, elsewhere, the Allied cause was looking none too bright.

About the same time, Communism, which had always been an almost negligible factor in Indian politics, began to raise its head. It did not constitute any serious menace, but it appeared that the Communists were trying to increase their adherents in Indian States and this caused anxiety to some of the Princes. Meetings to consider these activities were held in New Delhi under the chairmanship of Sir Henry Craik at which the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar, the Maharajahs of Bhopal, Jaipur and Mayurbhunj and Miss Maqbal Mahmud attended. Many matters regarding the security of the States, the loyalty of State Forces and Congress activities were discussed. The suggestions made did, I think, much to relieve the fears of the Rulers.

About this time Mr. Trivedi took over the appointment of Secretary, Defence Department. He was a very able civil servant of great administrative experience. After India achieved independence he became, I think, Governor of the Central Provinces. He was a very likeable man and I enjoyed working with him.

Now that the policy of the Congress was clear, plans had to be made to deal with the leaders, if the Working Committee's resolu-

tion was ratified and the plan for non-violent non-co-operation proceeded with. There was not much time as Congress was billed to meet in Bombay on August 8. It was obvious that, in the prevailing conditions, they could not be allowed to remain at large to organise a movement to disrupt communications, impair the industrial war effort or interfere with recruiting. They might have to be detained and the question was, where? Ordinary prisons were not suitable or desirable places for such detainees and it was better to place them somewhere where they could be securely and properly looked after. Again, it was necessary that any plans made for an eventuality which might not arise, should be secret.

A suggestion was made, by some source unknown, to the Viceroy that they should be detained in the fort at Attock, which stands on an eminence in the northern Punjab overlooking the wide confluence of the Kabul and Indus rivers. It is intensely hot in summer, very cold in winter and the area is malarious. It is some 1200 miles from Bombay by rail and the only favourable aspect was that it is situated in an area where the population is mainly Muslim, while the Congress leaders were Hindus. I objected to this proposal, firstly on the ground that to take the arrested men a long journey by rail through areas which might well be disturbed (it would be impossible to keep their arrest secret) would be a difficult operation and lead to trouble and, secondly, it would be most undesirable to confine them in a place where their health might suffer.

I remembered my early sojourn in Ahmednagar, in the Deccan, which is only 3 or 4 hours journey from Bombay by rail. The climate there is temperate all the year round and there is no malaria. The old Moghul (or Mahratta?) fort had high masonry walls, surrounded on three sides by a deep, broad, dry moat. It could be entered only by a single Main Gate, reached by a bridge (which had once been a draw-bridge) over the moat. At the gate was a guard-house and over this, on the wall, were several apartments once occupied by members of the Afghan Royal Family who had been interned during the middle of the 19th century. Within the walls was a large, grassed open space. I recommended it on grounds of easy access from Bombay, security and health. The proposal was accepted.

"Top Secret" arrangements were put in hand at once in conjunction with Southern Command and Bombay and Madras Police. Hutments, cooking, sanitary and medical buildings were erected in the large open space within the fort and prison warders, cooks and menials earmarked from Madras. The guard was to be furnished from the British battalion stationed in Ahmednagar. Mahatma Gandhi, who was old and frail, had to receive special treatment and it was arranged to place him under house arrest in the Aga Khan's palace in Poona, should the need arise.

On July 28, Miraben (Miss Slade) came to New Delhi and asked for an interview with the Viceroy. He did not wish to see her and become involved, so it was arranged that I should go to tea with her at Birla House the following day. I did not relish these jobs as they were not really my business and I should get the blame if I put a foot wrong. I was told to find out what she wanted.

Next day was hot and sticky, with monsoon showers, when I reached Birla House at 4.0 p.m. Mr. Birla, courteous as ever, met me, introduced me to Miraben and then vanished. We went into an alcove off the hall where tea was served and Miraben officiated rather in the manner of a great lady entertaining a guest. It was a nice tea and we discussed "cabbages and kings" until the servants cleared away and we were left alone.

Miraben was slight, dark and middle-aged, dressed in a sari of coloured home-spun cloth. I do not think she recognised me and I did not remind her, but I remembered her coming to Old Delhi in, I think, 1920 when as Miss Slade she first came to India with her father Admiral Slade. I met her at more than one function and I think (though I am not sure) we once danced at Maiden's Hotel there. Since then she had come under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, had become an inmate of his Ashram and was one of his closest adherents. I had little doubt that she had come to New Delhi with his approval, if not at his orders, and would speak with his voice.

She began to detail her complaints and I got out a notebook and pencil to list them. They were all concerning hardship to villagers over aerodrome construction, mainly in the Meerut and Delhi districts. The problems of re-settlement and compensation, the rising prices of food-stuffs, the iniquities of the Police, grow-



ing dissatisfaction and so forth; nothing I did not know already. I listened to this with genuine sympathy and said I would arrange for her to meet local officials and village headmen on the spot and that I would accompany her myself in the Delhi district. All these were preliminaries and I began to wonder what was the main reason for her visit.

Presently she began to talk about the Congress resolution (which was common knowledge) and its implications, of the feelings of political frustration following the failure of the Cripps mission and warned of the dangers of the situation which might arise unless the Government did something at once, before it was too late. She also referred to the determination of the Congress leaders to continue to agitate by all non-violent means until India gained independence and repeated that what was wanted was independence at once and not nebulous promises of independence at some future time. She spoke of the dangers of the Japanese threat which, she maintained, could only be averted by the grant of independence which would unite the country. I gathered that if independence was not granted, she would not be averse to a Japanese invasion if that would help towards its attainment.

I listened to all this without comment, my notebook having been put away. Then came the question I was sure she had been sent to ask. What action would be taken regarding the Congress leaders if they persisted in their plans? This was the third time I had heard this, and this time I merely "played the idiot child". I explained that I was merely concerned with the matter of aerodrome construction and to protect, so far as possible, those who were affected by it. As a soldier I did not dabble in politics and would merely obey the orders, if any, given me by Government which was responsible for constitutional changes. I wonder if she believed me?

Later I went with her to the site of the aerodrome being constructed south of Delhi. Here, as arranged, we met the local officials, the village *Lambardars* (Headmen) concerned and deputations of villagers. The new land allotted to them was better than the old and the compensation for any re-settlement erred, if at all, on the side of generosity. The bone of contention was when and how the money would be paid. The villagers wanted a lump sum down. The local officials wanted to pay it in instalments to ensure

that it was really used for re-settlement, that the recipients were not swindled and the money was not frittered away. The reports from Meerut district were, in the main, the same. The peasant had to be protected from himself and from the many 'sharks' who lay in wait to despoil him.

In the meantime the secret arrangements at Ahmednagar and elsewhere had been completed. On August 7 I wrote: "Congress met today at Bombay and it is evident they do not mean to climb down. So it seems that the leaders will have to go in the bag." Next day I wrote: "Congress confirmed the Working Committee's resolution at 10.0 p.m. I presume the arrests will be made according to plan." Everything went like clock-work. The leaders were all arrested at 1.0 a.m. on August 9 and put into a special train. There was only one slight contretemps. Their train reached Poona about 7.0 a.m. and stopped for a few minutes at an empty platform. As it was halted another train came in on a nearby platform carrying a number of students. The arrested men shouted to them and Mr. Nehru managed to get out of his carriage. He had a scuffle with the Superintendent of Police until he was put back again. (The police officer later commented that he never believed Mr. Nehru could be strong.) The train was then started and the arrested men vanished from public gaze. I think it was a very long time before news leaked out as to their place of detention. Mahatma Gandhi was taken quietly under special arrangements to the Aga Khan's palace, where he should have been very comfortable.

Next day the "balloon began to go up" as news of the arrests spread. There were riots in Bombay and Delhi at which armed police and troops had to be called out to restore order and prevent arson. In both cities there were *hartals* (strikes). During the week in Delhi the Town Hall and the Fire Station, with all the appliances, were burnt down and there was looting and arson in Chandni Chowk (the main street in Delhi) and Connaught Circus (the shopping centre in New Delhi). Escorted convoys had to be arranged to take clerks, male and female, from New Delhi to their quarters in Old Delhi and the latter had to be protected. Elsewhere there were sporadic outbreaks in Ahmedabad, Cawnpore and Lucknow. By August 16 serious disturbances were occurring in Calcutta, Nagpur and Madura in south India. The troubles spread

to eastern India, with arson, sabotage and looting. Eastern Army had to send aircraft to strafe mobs destroying the railway line near Patna. The Railway Security Scheme was put into force all over India to guard bridges and essential junctions. There was much destruction of Government buildings, isolated Police Stations and railway property in Bihar and the United Provinces, particularly around Patna and Benares. Railway stations were burned down and miles of track torn up. On August 17, two R.A.F. officers were killed by a mob near Patna. Millions of pounds worth of damage was done.

In view of these developments a small committee, which later became a sub-Committee of Council, met under Sir Reginald Maxwell, Home Member of Council. It included Sir Alan Hartley, Deputy C-in-C, two or three officials, Feroze Khan Noon, J. P. Srivastava and myself. Its object was to consider internal security matters. During the disturbances, the All-India Muslim League held aloof and took no part, but communal feelings were running very high. It was a symptom of the time that Feroze Khan Noon and J. P. Srivastava, after wordy battles, nearly came to blows over the Committee table. It was not an encouraging start, but we persevered. Unfortunately this sub-Committee degenerated into a heated debating society and we got really little value out of it. Elsewhere the question of proclaiming Martial Law in certain areas was considered, but this did not prove necessary. It was late in September that the situation began to come under control.

The Congress plans, which had been designed to operate simultaneously all over India, went off at "half-cock". The disturbances were sporadic and localised and, though very serious, could be dealt with piecemeal. Since the Muslim population held aloof, many areas with a predominantly Muslim population, such as the Punjab, remained quiet. There is no doubt that the immediate arrest of the leaders disorganised their plans, whether non-violent or violent, and that their previous claim that subordinates could carry on without them proved fallacious. The leaders claimed that their arrest turned their non-violent plans into violent disorders and that the blame for the disorders rested on the action taken by Government. Such a claim is open to grave doubt. The Congress plan was, in effect, the staging of an insurrection to sub-

vert the Government and the very nature of the disorders showed clearly that some such form of action may have been in the minds of the leaders as a last resort, when non-violent means had failed, as they were likely to fail. As it turned out the violence started at once which was, probably, better than if it had to come eventually.

The history of political agitations in India during the first 40 years of the 20th century showed very clearly how they progressed and, indeed, enabled one to forecast what would happen with certainty. They started on non-violent lines but, sooner or later, the followers got out of hand and clashed with the forces of law and order. Then there was bloodshed. Whatever the desires of the organisers, it was impossible to inflame a large ill-informed, uneducated and emotional population, containing a considerable hooligan element and bedevilled by religious differences, and then control their actions. It is easy to raise the whirlwind but very difficult, if not impossible, to control the resultant storm.

Political agitators had, for years, been indoctrinating the peasants and townspeople alike, with hatred of the Government which, among other things, was accused of oppression and exploiting the people for gain. The use of Indian resources for a war in the direction of which Indians had no hand and which was, as explained, not for India's benefit, was a very strong argument. Even in remote villages the cries "The British Raj is finished" and "British Raj must go" had been heard for some years. With such a background the leaders must have known that their movement could not for long proceed on non-violent lines. If the Allied war effort was to be disrupted, it had to be done at once and with things apparently going badly for the allies, this was the time to strike. I never saw any direct evidence that it was the intention to let the Japanese into India. But this was a risk which the Congress leaders must have known they had to take.

Through all this period a heavy strain fell on the police, both armed and unarmed. They were organised on a provincial basis, irrespective of creed. The armed police were normally used to deal with gangs committing robbery and cattle-stealing in the villages, but also for escorting bullion between Government treasuries. They could, however, be used to support unarmed constables in the event of riots, either in cities or villages. Many hard things

were said about them in a country where *dasturi*, or squeeze, was traditional. By and large they were a very fine body of men. They were attacked, some were killed, many were injured, but they remained staunch throughout the troubles and deserve the highest praise.

It is curious how patchy the disturbances were, even in areas where the Congress was strongest. My Indian battalion had a company of Jats (Hindus) recruited from the Delhi and Gurgaon districts. Many old pensioners used to come in to see me, for I was an influential "friend at court" and had no hesitation in helping my friends who wanted to get jobs for sons and relations. Early in September when the disturbances were in full swing I had an invitation from pensioners to go 20 miles to the south to Gurgaon and the same distance to another rural township to the west. They delighted in "tea parties".

I drove out to each in my own car taking with me an officer from the U.S. Observer Group, who wanted to see the countryside and people. He was, at first, very apprehensive and wanted to carry a pistol, which I told him to leave behind. At each place some 200 pensioners and villagers had collected to meet me and after the usual garlanding with strings of marigolds we had a large tea and, in conclusion, I was asked to give them a short address. Nothing could have been more enjoyable.

At the township to the west I found strings of paper flags across the street in my honour and a party of young men in khaki uniform holding ropes on either side to keep the street clear for my car. I thought they might be Boy Scouts and, later, asked the senior pensioned Indian officer present, who they were, for they had saluted me very smartly. He told me that they were Congress volunteers, who had turned out to enjoy the *tamasha*! India is a most extraordinary country.

During 1942, Standard Time for all-India was introduced after a struggle lasting several years. Summer and Winter Time also came into force.

As a tailpiece to this tale of woe, in September I recorded: "Today saw Gilbert Laithwaite (Private Secretary to the Viceroy) riding a bicycle. How are the mighty fallen!" In the gathering dusk some of the lights were being extinguished on Olympus!

*The Closing Months—1942*

WHILE THE major disturbances following the arrest of the Congress leaders were in progress, there were troubles in other parts of India. Among these was the serious situation created by the Farqi Hurs of Upper Sind, which amid the rest of the turmoil attracted little notice.

These people belonged to a fanatical Muslim sect. Racially they were closely connected with the various Baluch tribes who inhabit the tracts running along the western boundaries of the Province. The latter were poor, rather backward people, camel drivers, small cultivators and so forth who normally gave no trouble. They were not among the "fighting classes" and were not recruited into the Indian Army. But the Hurs were followers of the Pir Pagaro, a religious leader, who had his large shrine and residence at Pir-jo-Goth (literally, the House of the Pir) in Upper Sind. They were racially quite distinct from the Sindhis of Lower Sind, many of whom were Hindus. Their activities, which had to be suppressed, had no connection at all with either the Muslim League, or Congress.

As early as March 1942 it became clear that the situation in Upper Sind, and to some extent in Lower Sind, was becoming increasingly unsatisfactory. In Upper Sind the Hurs were committing murder and robbery on a considerable scale. They attacked their victims with small hatchets, had created a reign of terror and *the police were becoming demoralised. It was clear that Pir Pagaro was at the bottom of the trouble but it was very uncertain who was behind him, if any one.* Rumours were rife. There was one almost incredible tale afoot that T. E. Lawrence, who had once been with the R.A.F. in Karachi as "Aircraftsman Shaw", had returned to Baluchistan to "lead a movement", but what this was, who for or who against, never could be ascertained. Probably it was spread to cause unrest. Another possibility was that a German

agent had slipped in undetected from East Persia, after the manner of Wassmuss during World War I, and found a useful tool in Pir Pagaro, who would do anything for money. There was much to gain from the Axis point of view, for the main railway from Karachi to Lahore and thence to north-east India ran through the Hur country. The American base was at Karachi; this railway carried military stores and equipment and any tampering with it would be a serious matter. The possibility of Communist activity was examined but no evidence of this obtained. It may have been only the Pir Pagaro working on his own for some unknown reason.

Early in April bands of Hurs began to show activity on and near the railway and station staffs became apprehensive. A few deserted their posts. On April 7 there was a high level meeting at New Delhi at which the Viceroy presided and the Governor of Sind was present. It had become obvious that something drastic would have to be done, but the Governor was averse to military intervention and the Viceroy supported him. On the other hand we were well aware that the police chiefs in Sind had strongly advocated military assistance. When a serious situation arises the civil authorities are always averse to calling in military help, for to do so is an admission that matters are passing out of their control. This attitude is often unfortunate for, if things are done in time, more drastic action can be avoided by preventing a nasty situation from developing.

On May 16 a large gang of Hurs wrecked the Karachi-Lahore mail train in Upper Sind and this was the last straw. An Indian infantry battalion was ordered up to the affected section of line to ensure night running of supply trains. Special powers were recommended together with sanction for air action against gatherings of Hurs in inaccessible desert areas. The Viceroy was still unprepared to sanction these but on May 18, the Governor of Sind, possibly on the insistence of his police chiefs, asked for Martial Law to be proclaimed in the affected area.

For sometime we had expected this request; the requirements had been calculated and preliminary orders and instructions drafted. In many of these the Law Department of the Government of India had to be consulted closely and I found Mr. Shavax Lal of that department very helpful. Roughly what he said was, "Do

not bring me a plan and ask me if it is legal. Merely tell me what you want to do and, although Martial Law is the negation of ordinary law, I will advise how the law can be stretched to give it some semblance of law." It was also necessary to consult the Judge Advocate General at G.H.Q.

Ultimately a form of "Non-statutory Martial Law" was introduced. This obviated the necessity of the issue of any orders by the Government of India, which might have been embarrassing, though the Viceroy was kept fully in touch with day-to-day happenings. In practice the Commander-in-Chief appointed a Martial Law Administrator (Major General "Dicky" Richardson) and he went down to a headquarters at Hyderabad in Sind and proclaimed Martial Law. This was apparently on his own initiative, though in practice he was in daily consultation with and under the control of the General Staff at G.H.Q.

When our detailed proposals were sent to the Governor of Sind, to my astonishment he recommended that the Martial Law area we had suggested should be increased. Roughly it was in the desert area (the Great Indian or Thar desert) between the main line railway on the west and the Jodhpur-Bikanir railway, running east from Kotri, on the south—area of some 16,000 square miles. Major General Richardson was given Mr. F. Young, Indian Police, as his police adviser, two more Indian infantry battalions were raked up and arrangements were made for air action by a flight of Lysander aircraft from Karachi if necessary. The Martial Law Proclamation was finalised and a number of preliminary Orders under it prepared. These dealt with the setting up of Martial Law courts, the prescription of various foreseeable offences (which could be added to as required) and the punishments for conviction. The latter ranged from fines (the maximum was very high), through imprisonment up to life sentences (deportation was not included, as the penal settlements in the Andaman Islands were no longer available), the death sentence and confiscation of property. Arrangements were made for convicted persons to be held in civil jails. Important orders not only denied a convicted person any right of appeal, but gave the Martial Law Administrator the power to confirm, vary, reduce, or enhance any sentence imposed by a Martial Law court. This enabled him to act if he thought a sen-



tence was too severe or too lenient. In effect all he required from a court was a conviction, after which, since all proceedings came to him for confirmation, he could do what he liked with the convicted person and, if he thought fit, hang him.

The proclamation caused little notice or comment in India, since politicians were too busy with their own concerns at the time. The press made little comment and censorship was clamped down on all happenings in the area, though brief official communiques were issued from time to time. I do not remember having to answer any complaints from anyone, not even the Secretary of State for India, who normally in such matters caused a great deal of trouble. No one had ever heard of the Hurs, except their victims in Sind, and consequently they were not news.

With the proclamation of Martial Law and the arrival of the troops, the morale of the police went up and they did excellent work. The task of breaking up the Hur gangs was a difficult one. They had hide-outs in the desert to the north of the area and in the swamps of the Makki Dand to the south. There were no roads and few tracks, the going in heavy sand was exhausting and the heat at that time of the year was intense. The troops moved in small columns, with pack transport, carrying their water and supplies and covering considerable distances. Normally a column could remain out for 4-5 days when it had to return to replenish. Sometimes they came up with Hur gangs, sometimes they found nothing. The desert was not flat as it appears from the railway line. There were dunes and ridges of sand formed by wind and weather. Running from north to south were shallow nalas, which may have been old beds of the Indus river, in some of which were pools of brackish water, scrub vegetation and even a few crocodiles. In the Makki Dand, the swamps, some shallow some deep, were covered with high reed and mimosa trees. Myriads of waterfowl gave warning of any approach and the tracks made by the Hurs were hard to find. These operations went on for some six months, during which Hurs were killed or captured and great quantities of stolen camels and other live stock recovered. The troops and police suffered considerable hardship.

The Pir Pagaro was a special problem. Early in the operations (prior to the introduction of Martial Law) the police managed

to lay hands on him. He was wanted for several personal murders and for the brutal ill-treatment of young boys and women. He was sent to a jail in the Central Provinces for security until he could be brought to trial. The only word that can adequately describe the Pir is "monster". This does not refer to his physical characteristics, though he was a huge man, dark, hirsute, bearded, with "magnetic" eyes which he may have used for hypnotic purposes, but his morals, ruthlessness, cruelty and way of life. He was alleged to have amassed a fortune of some Rs. 30 lakhs in silver (about £200,000) but although much search was made for this, and his compound at Pir-jo-Goth dug up, nothing of this size was ever found. He had, however, a large modern safe and this was brought to Hyderabad and with some difficulty opened. We expected to find the treasure inside.

A broad shelf divided the interior. On it was a large collection of bottles, phials and boxes of pills which, on examination by experts, proved to be aphrodisiacs of all kinds. In the lower half of the safe were three leather bound albums filled with pornographic photographs. Some of these dated from the time of the Paris Exposition in the 1870s, when vast numbers were exported from France; others were of Japanese origin and probably came through Calcutta where there was a considerable trade in pornography. A few seemed to have been taken of the Pir himself engaged in various sexual acts. The face of the man had been blacked out, but the rest of him bore a close resemblance to photographs we had of the Pir. That was all the safe contained.

When the troops had completed their task and the Hurs were crushed and scattered (it took about six months) the Pir was flown back to Hyderabad to stand trial by Martial Law court. He was indicted on several counts. He was given every facility to prepare his defence and at first endeavoured to obtain Mr. M. A. Jinnah to defend him. To this we had no objection, since Mr. Jinnah was not a criminal lawyer but mainly an expert on company law. However, he refused to take the brief and the Pir engaged another advocate. In order to obviate having to call on the Sind Government to undertake the prosecution, which might later have caused them embarrassment, Mr. Petigara, Crown Prosecutor of Bombay, appeared as Prosecutor.

sibly as a result of having nothing particular to do, but mainly as a result of bad and inefficient officers, there were one or two cases of mass indiscipline. Those involved had to be dealt with under Nepalese military law. They were sent back to Nepal where, I believe, they received brutal treatment.

One of the brothers of the ruling Rana family, General Bahadur Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana, was sent to India as their Commanding General. He was a short stocky man, with a stutter and although we remained throughout on cordial terms, he gave me and others a great deal of trouble. I never discovered if he had any military knowledge, but he was a great collector of foreign decorations, displayed a "fruit salad" of medal ribbons and had half the alphabet after his name. He several times endeavoured to induce me to get him a high decoration from the Indian Government, but in this he was disappointed. When he left India in March 1963, he was succeeded by his brother Lieutenant-General Sir Krishna Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana, who was very efficient. I believe that, later, one or more Nepalese battalions were employed with Eastern Army in Assam.

Although the Muslim League had held aloof from the Congress disturbances, it became evident that there was a split in the Muslim camp. Feroze Khan Noon was very active in New Delhi and came to see me several times about *rising prices and the rationing* of foodstuffs, all of which was no business of mine. But late in August, Nawabzada Khurshid Ali Khan came to see me with private messages from Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, Premier of the Punjab. The upshot was that Feroze Khan Noon was being mischievous and he and Mr. M. A. Jinnah were playing the Muslim League against Sir Sikandar and instigating the *Khaksars* (a uniformed Muslim organisation started as a counter-blast to the Congress volunteers) who had been quiescent to make trouble. Thereby Sir Sikandar would have to take repressive measures and consequently his popularity would decline. Wheels within wheels! I could only say that Sir Sikandar had my sympathy but had the remedy in his own hands. The Imam of the Juma Masjid at Delhi, Syed Mohamed Ahmed Shahi, was another influential Muslim who was disturbed, though for another reason. He was much concerned that communal disorders would occur resulting from the Congress

disturbances in which many Muslims had lost their property by fire and looting in Delhi. He had been very helpful with advice and reassurance to Muslims in the Indian Army, somewhat on the lines followed by the Pir of Makhad during World War I. I took him to see Wavell and, later, gave him some introductions for his relatives who sought government appointments.

Sir Claude Auchinleck relinquished his command in Middle East in August and later returned to India. I saw a good deal of him as he was writing his Despatches, but the matter of his future employment was uncertain. It had been a very difficult year but towards the end Allied affairs began to look more promising both in Russia and North Africa, while the Japanese had not only been held on the Assam border, but by the end of December our troops had started to advance into the Arakan in the direction of Akyab. In an anonymous review of 1942 which I wrote for the *Statesman* of Calcutta, I was not far wrong in reflecting that, "while there are already doubts about Axis morale, Allied morale is rising daily". My private view was that there was a tough time ahead in 1943.

Towards the end of 1942, two fatalities occurred, one serious, the other not. At midnight on December 26, Sir Sikander Hayat Khan died suddenly. He had been the "Strong Man" of the Punjab and had guided his Province wisely, through troublous times, for several years. His death at this time was a tragedy, for it was uncertain who could succeed him in the Premiership. Liaquat Hayat Khan? Feroze Khan Noon? Or Khizar Hayat Khan? It was certain that Mr. Jinnah would start to pull strings, though few people wished to see one of his puppets in power.

The second was the death of the ex-Maharajah of Nabha. He had been removed from his State for mal-administration and incompetence. In the early 1920s he might have been seen driving around Old Delhi in a large Rolls-Royce car, with a body in the shape of an enormous swan. This spectacle gave much pleasure and amusement to the populace who nicknamed him the *Batakh Rajah*, an Indian pre-Disney form of "King (or Donald) Duck". At the time, Pundit Motilal Nehru told me, "The man is mad!" I would have preferred to say that he was a little eccentric.

## XXIII

### *Spring 1943*

DURING THE autumn of 1942 the "American invasion of India" had proceeded with ever increasing momentum. Their main base was at Karachi and their operational area in East Bengal, but there was a considerable influx into Delhi, where accommodation was already short. Colonel Osman of the U.S. Observer Group complained to me bitterly of the extortionate attitude of Delhi Hotel keepers, which he had described as "sheer robbery". The Americans had taken over the Imperial Hotel and two others to house their staffs.

I could only tell him that as the result of American "spending capacity", which was far greater than most British and Indian residents, many domestic servants and menials were deserting their old employers in search of the very high rates of pay offered by Americans. In fact, the servant market was thoroughly upset and dissatisfied. Previously the Americans had been given a list of normal monthly wages paid to various types of domestic servants, as well as monthly lists of bazar prices for staple commodities, but these seem to have passed unnoticed. As a result the prices of many commodities rose by leaps and bounds, though the actual demand was not greatly increased.

It was somewhat difficult to deal with the American N.C.O., or "G.I.". British and Indian soldiers with "time off", generally played some outdoor game, kicked a football about, or practised hockey. Their American counterparts, seemed to play no outdoor games (there were no facilities for Base-ball or American style football) but stood about on street corners looking for liquor or women or both. Both Lady Linlithgow and Lady Wavell had, for a long time, been active with committees of British and Indian ladies and voluntary workers, providing comforts and amenities for British and Indian troops, both in India and overseas. In November 1942 they had opened an Allied Forces Canteen in

the Masonic Hall in New Delhi, which was staffed by voluntary workers and sold no alcoholic beverages. It was well patronised by the troops. A similar canteen was opened at Delhi railway station, but had to be closed owing to rowdyism. These ladies also organised trips to many of the old architectural sites which surround Delhi. These arrangements, which were only part of other activities, were largely designed for the cold weather, for in the intense heat of summer many helpers had to go up to the hills. Stories were put about that ladies in India did nothing for the troops. This was a canard, for not only in Delhi, but in the provinces as well, similar committees were at work, particularly in East Bengal, Karachi and Bombay, where troops were stationed, or passing through, and at British and Indian military hospitals.

At Karachi a different form of trouble arose over American appetites. Apparently the "G.I." delighted in a diet of eggs, poultry (Chicken Maryland?) and apple pie. The apples were easy to supply and owners of orchards in the Himalayas did better business than they had for many years. It was said, however, that a "G.I." would sit down to a meal which included 10 or 12 eggs before starting on anything else. The market was not geared to supply this sudden demand for eggs and chickens, Sind and south Baluchistan began to be denuded of both, the demand soon reached as far south as Madras and even the Punjab and Delhi were affected. The price of eggs soared and a fowl which might previously have cost about 7d or 1s could hardly be obtained for 2/6d! It was the old story of which came first? The egg or the chicken or the egg? It seemed that if the American rate of consumption continued for any length of time India would soon have none of either!

We had several visits from U.S. General "Vinegar Joe" Stillwell, U.S. Adviser to Chiang Kai-shek. He was a character but could be most amusing. Perhaps he and I had something in common, for we had both had experience of China and Chinese. It appears, however, from the memoirs he published shortly before his death, that he did not like Wavell. He never showed it at any time. He had no illusions about Chinese chicanery. We were anxious to try to arrange escapes for British personnel captured at Hongkong and held by the Japanese on the mainland. It was hop-

ed that Chinese commanders in contact with the Japanese in south-east China might co-operate. Stillwell held out no hopes, for he said that Chinese War-lords and Japanese Generals had working arrangements to avoid trouble and were chiefly engaged in feathering their nests. There were, I think, a few escapes arranged to Indo-China, with the help of Pearl river pirates.

The Chinese now had a depot at Ramgarh where stores to be flown to China "over the hump" were collected. Whether everything sent corresponded accurately with the description stencilled on the box is open to conjecture. There had been similar trouble at Rangoon when the stores were sent by lorry. It seems that some cases marked as "automatics" may have contained very saleable consumer goods. There was a great coming and going of Chinese Generals and Colonels, but it is doubtful if many of them had any military knowledge at all. I labelled them as "military commissars" and there is no doubt they attempted to dabble in Indian politics. I met in Delhi a certain Dr. Wu, who was known as "the Voltaire of China". I have no doubt he was a great scholar, but I put him down as "about as straight as a corkscrew". On the other hand Mr. George Yeh came through on his way to join the Chinese Embassy in London. He was an able man and I was to see more of him later.

On February 1, Field Marshal Sir John Dill came to Delhi to see Wavell. He had been to Chungking with U.S. General H. H. Arnold for a series of discussions with Chiang Kai-shek. He had cleared up several matters but it was very hard to pin the Chinese down to any lasting arrangement.

Internally, things had settled down in India after the disturbances of August and September 1942, but on February 4, Mahatma Gandhi, who, with other Congress leaders, was still detained, announced that he would fast for 21 days, commencing on February 9. This was a protest against further detention. As a fast by the Mahatma would arouse public interest and might well provoke *hartals* (strikes) and other non-co-operative activities, warnings were sent out to alert all Internal Security Commanders.

This was not to be a "fast unto death", but only a period fast. It was, of course, a political weapon, but such fasts never seemed to me to be weapons of any great value apart from inflaming pub-

lie interest among co-religionists and political supporters. These fasts were a game in which the opening and closing gambits were well known and the only real interest was in the moves of the middle game. The result was always a draw, for there was no question of an irresistible force meeting an immovable mass. The person fasting had no intention of losing his life, while the Government had no wish that he should die, or injure himself. Thus towards the end, either the Government made some small concession, or a face-saving formula was devised by which the fast could be ended with honour. Unlike chess, however, there was a Joker in the game. Fate might take a hand and, as the person fasting grew inevitably weaker some complication might arise to endanger his health, or even life. These fasts had no connection with hunger-strikes in criminal jails. There, a hunger-striker could always be forcibly fed.

The Mahatma, however, was by no means young and, possibly because his way of life was ascetic and frugal, he was frail. It was, therefore, only prudent to take precautions in case the "Joker" started to take a hand during the fast. Should his life be endangered or should he die (which no one wanted) there would be serious repercussions and even communal strife. Plans were therefore prepared to be put into action in case this should happen. Such an emergency was considered remote, for the Mahatma had his own doctors to look after him as the fast progressed and there are several well known methods of introducing nourishment into the body in liquid form without the individual having to eat anything and thus break the fast.

The Mahatma duly started his fast on February 10 and the Viceroy's Council voted 7 to 6 to keep him in detention. On February 15 the question of his fast was raised in the Assembly on an adjournment motion and talked out. By February 17, after only 8 days of fast, the Mahatma's condition was reported to be getting serious. Something had gone wrong and the "Joker" was starting to play. By February 19 his condition was said to be critical. He was suffering from Uraemia and it was feared his heart and brain might be affected. The Senior Civil Surgeon from Bombay was sent to give his advice. He then seemed a little better but February 21 was reported to be a critical day. He then improved



whether a file was linked with other files or not, it was easy to see why a decision resulting in a letter had been made and who had made the decision. But India Office files merely contained small scraps of paper, some of which were initialled and some were not, and it was almost impossible to find out what had led to the issue of a letter. I was told that this system was observed to avoid accumulation of paper, which was certainly correct. But I came to the conclusion that the real reason was to conceal the identity of the person really responsible for something which might be called in question. No one wanted to be caught out for having made a decision!

The India Office, in financial matters, was closely bound by Treasury regulations and various "laws of the Medes and Persians", probably dated from the East India Company's period, which could not on any account be changed. An example was that of my own emoluments. Both I and the officers of my staff, were serving officers of the Indian Army. Thus the members of my staff were entitled to certain "overseas allowances", one of which was separation allowance from wife and family. This was right and proper. But I myself, as head of the Department, came under an ancient rule whereby part of my pay was as a "Civil Servant" and part as an Army Officer. Nothing short of an Act of Parliament could change this rule. Thus, in effect, I drew less pay than the Brigadier who was my senior staff officer!

At that time the late Sir David Monteith was Permanent Under Secretary of State at the India Office. He was a very able man and nice to work with. He had been, off and on, at the India Office since 1910 and I might almost say that the "iron had eaten into his soul". In 1919 he had been Private Secretary to Lord Sinha, then Under Secretary of State. Later he was Private Secretary to Lord Birkenhead, Viscount Peel, Lord Stansgate and Sir Samuel Hoare and was Secretary to the Burma Round Table Conference in 1931. Thus there was nothing much he did not know about India's constitutional problems. His Deputy was Sir Cecil Kisch, who had been to India with Edwin Montagu in 1917 when the latter conferred with Lord Chelmsford on the first stages of political reforms. He was an expert on financial matters.

I do not think Monteith had ever been to India, while Kisch

had only been there for a brief visit. It always struck me that they looked at India as a place on a map, to be dealt with through a vast collection of reports, memoranda, results of conferences, precedents, rules and regulations. They had met many Indian political leaders and Princes who had come to London for conferences and discussions but can, I think, have had little idea of the complexity of day-to-day problems of Indian administration. It was, I think, of necessity a somewhat inhuman, or detached, outlook which could not comprehend the lives of the millions of people who lived and had their being on the "map" which hung in their offices. Which does not imply that they were not sympathetic, or had not the advancement of India's progress always in mind.

Thus, as my own work in the Military Department went on, I began to realise that between Whitehall and Delhi there was a great gulf fixed which it was almost impossible to bridge. The differences between the two were, largely, questions of Time and Space. From Delhi came the views of the men on the spot, but in Whitehall decisions had frequently to be made after consultations with the Government in power as well as other Government Departments and often on a somewhat theoretical basis. It was exactly the same in matters affecting General Headquarters, Delhi and the Military Department at the India Office and the Service Ministries. The former could not understand (particularly in time of War) why their urgent requests were not complied with, not realising that what they were asking for was not only in short supply but wanted by a number of other people. In addition there were difficulties about priorities for shipping with many cancellations of arrangements made at the last moment. Whatever the problem was, whether constitutional or material, there were bound to be differences of opinion, in spite of the fact that the India Office continually endeavoured to meet India's views. Perhaps, at the bottom of the trouble, was the century old system by which the British Government still controlled policy in India when, in spite of improved communications, the problems which arose had become increasingly complex with the passing of years.

In 1943, Leopold Charles Maurice Stennett Amery was Secretary of State for India. He had had much ministerial experience, having at one time held the offices of First Lord of the Admiralty

and Secretary of State for the Dominions and Colonies. In 1940 he took charge of the India Office. He had been a journalist and was at one time on the editorial staff of the *Times* and it seemed to me that he was a journalist at heart. He had been a staunch supporter of the fiscal policy of Joseph Chamberlain, was a close friend and supporter of Prime Minister Churchill (who never forgot his friends) and was an Imperialist and an upholder of the Empire. As such, together with Prime Minister Churchill, he viewed with some misgiving the claims of Indian nationalists and adhered firmly to the advances given by the India Act of 1935. He gave whole-hearted support to Lord Linlithgow's efforts to build up India's contribution to the defeat of the Axis powers.

Amery was a very kind man and I received much hospitality from him and his wife at their house in Eaton Square. He was no longer young (70 in 1943) and was getting very deaf. But his courage and fortitude were remarkable in spite of the domestic tragedy which overshadowed him. In 1943 his Xmas Card contained a poem composed by himself, entitled "Sursum Cor", which expressed his philosophy of life:

"Stand fast, my Soul . . .

. . . I see the summit shining,

My heart beats high, the day is far from ended.

What if we fail? Why then, no vain repining,

For to this issue all my days have tended."

He was, most unfortunately, that most dangerous being, an amateur strategist and, possibly as the result of his training as a journalist, tended to the unorthodox in such operations as those of Wingate in Burma. He had a habit of periodically sending notes on strategy to Prime Minister Churchill which had to be dealt with in the Cabinet Office and sometimes boomeranged on me. Sometimes infuriated people would phone me to ask why I let him do it? My reply was that I could not control his ideas which came to him during the watches of the night. I regret to say that I never let him (or anyone else except my Chief Staff Officer) see the secret plans of operations which reposed in my safe, but I had to consult him frequently on many matters connected with affairs

in India, particularly in regard to the supply of grains during the Bengal Famine of 1943-44. In all of which he was most helpful.

There were many occasions on which I had to attend high-level meetings with him and when I had to wait around half the night when he went to Cabinet meetings or the House of Commons and I might be required to supply him with data. Prime Minister Churchill liked to have meetings round about midnight, after which it was too late to go home and a few rather uncomfortable beds were provided for those left behind on duty in the India Office basement. There were also high-level meetings with Mr. Attlee (Deputy P.M.) in the Chair when Churchill was away. I may have been quite wrong, but I thought Attlee was very ineffective, perhaps because he was overshadowed by Churchill. He used to sit there saying very little and doodling on his blotting paper. He reminded me of the old man who when asked how he spent his time replied, "I sits and I thinks, but I mostly sits".

[At some of these meetings, with other service officers, mostly on questions of logistics, Sir James Grigg, then Secretary of State at the War Office was present. I had known him when he was Finance Minister in India. He had a remarkable command of basic English and might almost have been a soldier. He seemed not to have much use for Amery, and his audible remarks about him, in his presence, were often unprintable. Fortunately Amery was deaf! The trouble was that after a long and possibly acrimonious meeting Amery would produce a note of what he conceived were the conclusions, while Grigg produced a memorandum to the contrary. It then gave me a great deal of trouble to effect a compromise.]

It seemed to me that Amery did not receive the active support from his Cabinet colleagues which he might have expected and that they were inclined to cold-shoulder him. It may have been that they were absorbed in the immediate and urgent problems of the war in Europe, for in 1943-44 piloted air raids were still going on, to be followed by the serious attack of the Flying Bombs (V.1.) and later by the V.2. Thus, India's needs, which Amery tried to put forward, were thrust into the background in the face of pressing needs for other theatres of war. It may be that Amery's habit of writing memoranda to them on all sorts of subjects, not

*Room 154—II*

HARDLY HAD I arrived in London in June 1943 (after a voyage which took 48 days round the Cape of Good Hope to Rio de Janeiro and back to Freetown) than it was announced that Wavell would succeed Lord Linlithgow as Viceroy of India in October and that Auchinleck would replace him as Commander-in-Chief immediately.

The last appointment would satisfy the Army and the Staff at G.H.Q. (who were getting restive at continual changes) but I could never understand Wavell's appointment, or why it was made. He was not particularly popular with the Indian politicians or with the Indian Members of the Viceroy's Council, for his views on constitutional reform, particularly in war-time, were well known. He had a laconic manner and was neither a good speaker nor broadcaster. It may be that he was selected in view of the forthcoming appointment of a Supreme Commander for South East Asia, who would be located in India. Or it may be that other suitable persons refused what was likely to be an onerous task. On the other hand it may be that Prime Minister Churchill wanted a man who would hold the fort against the threat from Japan coupled with possible unrest in India itself.

Wavell came to London at the end of June 1943 and was present at Guildhall when Prime Minister Churchill received the Freedom of the City of London on June 30. I was astonished to see that he received almost as large an ovation as that accorded to the Prime Minister and there was no doubt about his popularity. On July 1 he was created a Viscount and, thereafter, there were many meetings at the India Office with him, Amery, David Monteith and Lord Munster (Under Secretary of State) to consider many aspects of the new "set-up". Later on I had to preside at a luncheon at which Wavell met the editors of London newspapers and Lobby correspondents and made a speech which dealt mainly

with the military situation while avoiding comments on the question of India's political or constitutional problems. Still later the "Thirty Club" gave a luncheon at Claridges Hotel in his honour and the British Council a reception to a party of Indian Air Force Officers at both of which he spoke. But although he had much to say, he was not a good speaker and one could tell by watching his audience that his remarks did not go over well.

He finally left England in October and was installed as Viceroy at New Delhi on October 20. One evening in August, after working late at the India Office, I walked back with him across St. James' Park. The sun had set but it was "double summer time" and still light. It was a warm summer evening as we crossed the iron bridge over the water. The waterfowl were still seeking crumbs from people on the bridge, and couples were lying about on the grass enjoying the evening. For the first time since I had known him and worked with him, Wavell abandoned his laconic silence and in a lengthy monologue began to tell me something of what he thought about his new task. It was evident that he had been told something of what portended in the political field and he was not the sort of man who liked to be told what to do. I gathered he did not much relish what he was required to do. I maintained a strict silence. In due course we reached Buckingham Palace and here our roads parted. He went in the direction of Belgrave Square, while I continued up Constitution Hill towards my flat in Kensington. That was the last time I ever saw him.

I took over at the India Office from Major General (later Sir) Rob Lockhart and much later found that I was to be the last but one in a long line of Military Secretaries, dating from the time of the old East India Company. Between when I took over and the establishment of the Republics of India and Pakistan was a mere period of 4 years, though I did not know this then. In the meantime as I worked in Room 154 and walked along the interminable corridors, by day and sometimes by night, I seemed to sense the ghosts of the past all around.

Much of my work (in the military but not in the political field which did not concern me) was to obtain material and personnel to meet India's needs and to try to "put India's needs across" to the British public. It was a hard task, for most people's minds

were set on the war in Europe, both in the air and on the sea. Piloted air raids still continued while shipping was harassed by submarines. Food rationing was very strict in spite of black markets. The Press had much to think about in news of North Africa and Italy and had little space for items about Burma or India's eastern frontier. The B.B.C. would take no stories which did not in some way redound to its honour and glory. In fact many of us thought that the war was not being fought for Freedom, but to maintain the Charter of the B.B.C. On the top of everything the advent of American troops and General Eisenhower's Headquarters placed a general strain on what items were available. London taxi-drivers were particularly bad. They would drive past someone in a British uniform to pick up American G.I's and their girl friends and thus reaped a bumper harvest.

There were however many friends of India who were only too anxious to help. Sir S. Ranganadan and his daughter were very active and the former helped me over many matters from time to time. Among others were Sir Hassan Shruwaddy, Wazir Mir Ali, Sir Frank Brown (Secretary of the East India Association), Sir John Shea and Lord Birdwood. Many meetings were arranged including among them entertainment for Indian Officers and N.C.Os of the 4th Indian Division and visiting officers of the Indian Air Force. At many of these gatherings Indian Officers were enabled to speak. Lord Birdwood, who had been Commander-in-Chief in India, was a frequent visitor to my office and though extremely helpful took up much of my time with reminiscences and anecdotes and had a habit of inviting me to functions which were given by someone else (who I did not know) and this caused me embarrassment. But his prestige and influence were great and he was always ready to preside at a large meeting when topics regarding India were discussed. One of these was held at the Caxton Hall by the East India Association on October 5, 1943 (Appendix I). Sir John Shea also gave much help and staged a meeting of the Central Asian Society at which two officers of the Indian Air Force spoke.

It is quite impossible to detail all the many intricate matters which engaged me during 1943-45, but certain of them need recording.

One of the major items in 1943 was the establishment of South East Asia Command, with Headquarters in India, to prosecute the war against Japan. The necessity for this had been recognised for some time, following the fall of Singapore, the Japanese incursions into Thailand, Burma and the Netherlands East Indies and their virtual domination of the Bay of Bengal. I came into the picture in July 1943 in discussions on the "Memorandum and Directives". There were several names on the "short list" for the appointment of Supreme Allied Commander, who was to be British. It seemed to me when asked for my opinion (though I had nothing to do with the appointment) that Admiral Mountbatten would be the best choice, for I thought he would be popular in the United States and with the American commanders with whom he would have to work. (Much later, when Mountbatten had moved his headquarters from New Delhi to Ceylon, General Wedemeyer of the U.S. Forces in South East Asia came to see me about various matters. I was considerably shocked at his scathing references to the "Kandy Dandy").

In the end Admiral Mountbatten got the appointment and it was officially announced on August 25. The first meeting with him and with various representatives of the Admiralty, War Office and Royal Air Force, was at Combined Operations Headquarters (Richmond House, Whitehall) on September 2. I was not greatly impressed with his proposals for his staff, which originally was to be quite a small one, with a party of W.R.N.S. for clerical work and typing. The first idea was that his headquarters would be in New Delhi (already overcrowded) and that he would rely on the large set-up at G.H.Q. India for Intelligence and various services. Later on I was to have many meetings with Captain Jerram R. N., Mountbatten's Personal Assistant. He had to put up with many frustrations and sometimes came to me almost in tears. I was very sorry for him.

Mountbatten reached New Delhi on October 7, 1943. It was not long before he found that working there alongside G.H.Q. India was impossible and he moved with his staff to Ceylon. It was not long before his staff had grown from a small nucleus to some 3000-4000 people. General Sir Henry Pownall was appointed his Chief of Staff on October 15 and his other senior staff officers



were designated "Chief of this" and "Chief of that". Mountbatten was a prolific sender of cablegrams, some of which ran to several pages, which followed each other so rapidly that one had no time to digest the first before another arrived. But the history of South East Asia Command is chronicled elsewhere. I was only concerned, later, with the establishment of the "Rear Link" to progress its many requirements. In many ways the American atom-bomb attack on Hiroshima was a good thing. Otherwise there would have been a long-drawn "blood bath" ejecting the Japanese from Burma, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia.

The future of the Indian Mule Corps in Britain gave me much trouble. During the period of the "Phoney" war in 1939 and early 1940, after the movement of the British Expeditionary Force to the Low Countries it may have been envisaged that a period of siege warfare would develop as had been the case in 1914-18 and that might entail the movement forward of supplies through ground churned up by shell fire and converted into a quagmire. Thus, in December 1939, certain Indian Mule Companies were sent to join the Force to carry up supplies on pack-mules if necessary. These Indian units included Nos. 4 and 5 Pack Groups and Nos. 3, 7, 25, 29 and 42 Mule Companies. The men were all Muslims (mostly Punjabis) and the animals all small "General Service" mules, about 13 hands, each carrying a load of 160 lbs. that is 80 lbs. on each side of a pack saddle. Each man led 3 mules and, with his own equipment, was capable of lifting the 80 lb. load and adjusting it, when necessary, without help on the march.

In May 1940, the "Phoney" war abruptly ended and the Germans broke through between Meziere and Namur. By the end of the month the evacuation of the British Army from Dunkirk began. The Indian Mule Corps had been withdrawn from Northern France and were evacuated from Le Havre, but all their equipment and mules were left behind. On arrival in England they were employed on duties with remounts in the west country and partially re-equipped with pack saddlery. But the animals they had to handle were light-draught horses, between 15 and 16 hands, taking a pack load of 400 lbs., that is 200 lbs. on each side of the saddle. On December 7 1941 came the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour and America came into the war. During 1942, American

forces began to build up in Britain and accommodation was required for coloured units who were sent down to the west country. Thereafter the Indian Mule Corps was sent, with its animals, to the north of Scotland of all places! The area in which they were scattered was north of Inverness and between Inverness and Aberdeen. Climatically, it could hardly have been less suitable for Indian troops.

I visited the Mule Companies first in August 1943, going with Lieutenant-Colonel Sykes, Indian Army Service Corps, to Allan Grange House, Minlocky, headquarters of No. 4 Pack Group. Thence to Muir or Ord to see Nos. 7 and 25 Pack Companies. They staged a small mounted gymkhana for me with jumping and tent-pegging. A considerable number of children and local Scots gathered to see the fun. I was then asked to see a delegation of "Elders of the Kirk" who complained that men of the Indian Mule Companies engaged in sports and gymkhanas on Sundays which was profaning the Sabbath! I explained that the Indians did not regard Sunday as a Holy Day, but generally respected Fridays and regarded Sunday merely as a holiday for recreation. The Elders complained that the young people of the district came on Sundays to watch the Indians and were thus drawn away from their proper observance of the Sabbath. I said I was very sorry, but had no doubt that the Elders had their own means of exercising religious discipline.

I then went north by car to Dingwall, Larig, Golspie and Dornoch, all in Sutherland, where there were further detachments. At Dornoch I went round the Indian Hospital, talking to the men in the wards. It was a pleasant, light and airy place and well equipped. Major Aitchison, I.M.S., the senior medical officer was disturbed at the number of cases of glandular tuberculosis which, undoubtedly, had been brought on by the lack of sunshine to which the men had been accustomed in India. Several cases were under orders for repatriation. It was as I had feared. Next day came a long drive by car, eastwards from Inverness, to Rothes, where I saw headquarters of No. 5 Pack Group; to Aberlour, to meet Major General Neil Ritchie commanding the 52nd Lowland Division; to Knocke where No. 32 Mule Company marched past in pouring rain; and then to Maryculter where No. 42 Mule Com-

pany also marched past. At every place I visited I saw all the Indian Officers and N.C.Os and addressed the men.

There were not many complaints. The men's clothing and bedding were excellent, the accommodation good, the rations good and ample. The men, generally were fit and contented, the main disability rate being from kicks from the horses. There was no doubt that the light-draught horses, with their heavy pack loads were most unsuitable for the smallish men recruited by the Indian Army Service Corps. But these men had been away from India and their families for nearly four years in a "strange land". Some of the Indian Officers had made a few friends, but the Scots are a dour lot and do not take kindly to "foreigners". The men had little amenities outside their own barracks. It was, in my view and in the view of the Pack Group commanders, high time that they went back to India.

Later, in October, I went back to Scotland to see No. 5 Pack Group (Major Green) with Nos. 3 and 29 Mule Companies on manoeuvres with 52 Lowland Division in the Pitlochry-Loch Tay area. There was a Norwegian contingent with the Division and there was little doubt as to their ultimate destination. They were provided with Arctic equipment and clothing and with a new "compote" ration (including a special Indian ration) weighing 62 lbs. for 16 men for one day. It poured with rain the whole time and the Arctic equipment did not seem very suitable for mud and bogs. Unfortunately, the Mule Companies were never loaded and never got off a tarmac road. It seemed to me very doubtful if their light-draught horses would be suitable for mountain tracks in Norway.

I had much correspondence with G.H.Q. India who wanted the Mule Companies returned to India, or to join the 4th Indian Division who would probably be employed in the Dodecanese. Finally I got Amery to write to Field Marshal Alan Brooke (C.I.G.S.) and also went to see him to try to obtain their release. But the answer was the same. "They could not be spared at present". The trouble was that they would be wanted if a diversion had to be arranged in Scandinavia to draw off German troops from France before the projected D-day landings.

The story of 1944-45 is one of continual frustrations, too de-

tailed to be chronicled. As a result of casualties to Indian Army units in various theatres of war, the supply of young officers from India's training establishments was not sufficient to fill the gaps. Attempts to recruit in Great Britain had to be made. There was not much result from the Public Schools, though I visited several and addressed them. There was, however, response from Grammar Schools. A small Selection Board was set up to interview candidates and those selected were sent, in batches of 50 or 100, for preliminary training with the Royal West Kent Regiment at Maidstone, prior to being sent out to Officer Training units in India. Many headmasters of Grammar Schools reported uncertainly on candidates before they were seen by the Selection Board. Out of every batch which received three months training at Maidstone, the 10 who received the best reports contained, on average, 8 Grammar School to 2 Public School boys. At the end of each period of training I used to take headmasters down to see their former pupils. Generally speaking they could hardly recognise them, in either mental or physical appearance. Our efforts to recruit officer manpower in the United Kingdom were not looked on favourably by the War Office who had their own difficulties in the same field. They feared that many of those sent to training establishments in India would be diverted to fill vacancies in the Indian Civil Service. But another far more serious problem began to take shape in the autumn of 1944.

The matter came to a head when proposals were made to increase the pay and allowances of British Army personnel. The army in India was composed of both British and Indian army units, some of which were serving with 11th Army on the Burma front and others still in India itself. Among other increases in theatres of war were War Service Increments and Japanese Campaign Pay. The questions of who would be entitled to the increases and where was a major issue.

It will be seen from previous chapters that the "Indianization" of the Indian Army was started as a small experiment. There was little doubt that, originally, it was born in insincerity and it was hoped and believed that it would fail. Tardiness and meanness frustrated its early growth and persisted until the outbreak of war in 1939. This feeling still persisted in the minds of Indian

Commissioned Officers, who regarded such improvements as had been made in their conditions of service as "concessions" under pressure and had failed to remove a feeling of distrust that they were not receiving the same treatment as the British officers alongside whom they served. There is little doubt that the older Indian Commissioned Officers regarded any appointment made in the army jealously and were careful to note whether any discrimination had been shown. It was not the officers themselves who voiced grievances, but the Indian politicians, who were suspicious, often with good reason.

It may be that the fault, originally, was due to the fact that positions of high rank were shared by both Officers of the British Service and Officers of the Indian Army. The former, whose service in India was only temporary, were unable to take the long view and see the problem in its proper perspective. They (and possibly some statesmen in Whitehall) could not see that, ultimately, the Indian Army would be officered by Indians who would take their place in high appointments. Admittedly no one could, at that time, foresee when this would arise, but it was a fatal fault in the past to give grudgingly and always too late. For the Commander-in-Chief in India (and no one knew the Indian Army better than he did) this was a vital problem. He had to look ahead to the years after the war, though at that time no one expected that independence would come to India as early as 1947. The "Indianization" of the Indian Army was going on apace in war-time and if it was to be kept happy and loyal, the "differentials" in treatment, over a wide field, had to be ironed out, not only for the sake of the older officers but to attract younger men of whom there was no dearth of candidates provided the prospects were reasonable and equitable.

The trouble started on the question of improved pay and in India itself there were the conflicting views of the Commander-in-Chief, the Finance Member (Sir Jeremy Raisman) and the Indian Members of the Viceroy's Council. In Whitehall the views of the India Office, the War Office and the Treasury had to be reconciled. There were difficulties about War Service Increments and Japanese Campaign Pay. The real trouble crystallised into the question of British versus Indian Army personnel and whether

any increments should be paid to personnel serving in India itself as well as to those, such as 11th Army on the Burma front, in theatres of war. Very soon the various arguments became confused.

In view of the divergent opinions in India the Viceroy (Wavell) produced a "compromise", mainly based on the amount of cost to be borne by the Government of India and H.M. Government, which had always been a matter of argument over expenses incurred by India for war measures. The financial experts got hold of this and despatched a reply which was conspicuous for "complete unintelligibility". For myself I decided to fight the battle on grounds of "morale" (as we had done before in the case of improvement of pay for the Indian rank and file) and, largely, to throw overboard all the logistics produced by the various contestants. It was fully realised that some compromise with the Treasury might be necessary, but that compromise should be definitely to the advantage of the Indian Army. We advocated that provided Expatriation Allowance for Indian Commissioned Officers was given up, the latter should receive Japanese Campaign Pay both in and east of India; they would continue to receive the basic rates of pay exactly as their British comrades in the Indian Army, and that Viceroy's Commissioned Officers and Indian Other Ranks should receive Japanese Campaign Pay within India and to the east. In other words these were the main principles which the Commander-in-Chief advocated.

But I was not at all sure that these proposals would be accepted. From the psychological point of view, if the Commander-in-Chief said that his proposals were necessary to maintain the morale and development of the Indian Army during the war years (and for the future) they should be granted. If he was right (and I am sure that he was) his arguments were unquestionable, for he was the man who was responsible for keeping the army on an even keel. It was on those lines that I visualised the battle would have to be fought. I was reminded of the remarks by Lord Kit-chener, when Commander-in-Chief in India, over a case on which he held strong views, which had reached an impasse with Lord Curzon, then Viceroy. He then wrote on the file (a large one): "I have read all these papers. I see nothing to controvert my argu-

ments. Indeed, they are incontrovertible." And that was that! Unfortunately my time at the India Office came to an end before I had an opportunity to see the settlement of the problem.

Provision of amenities and welfare for the troops, both British and Indian, on the eastern frontier and in India itself was a perpetual headache, but both the War Office and G.H.Q. Delhi had their own Welfare organisations and it was not for the India Office to take action unless specially required to do so. The War Office (Welfare) was not particularly helpful, though no doubt it had many other commitments which may have been given prior consideration. There was, however, a "Morale Committee" sponsored by the Adjutant General and I attended several of their meetings. After one of these I wrote, "I sat below the salt next to the Chaplain General to the Forces, a happy mixture of sacred and profane. He looked shyly at me when on the few occasions I used basic English about help being given to India, but I hope he remembers me in his prayers, though I fear I am past praying for".

Matters were forced to a head on August 6, 1944, when the *Sunday Pictorial* published an article signed by Captain Bellenger, M.P., with the headline, "I accuse Mr. Amery", and an editorial caption, "Our men in India; an alarming report". It was probably as a result of this article and subsequent comment that the phrase "The forgotten men" arose. In the article was a vague attack on the condition of hospitals, welfare and amenities in India, and a comment that the conditions under which men were serving in India were "nothing short of scandalous". The writer concluded that "unless urgent steps are taken by Parliament . . . another Mesopotamian scandal . . . is likely to occur at no very distant date". Shades of Mesopotamia, which had dogged India for nearly 30 years and could not be forgotten! But the personal attack on Mr. Amery was very wide of the mark.

The whole of the article was mainly a political attack on "the Indian Government and a Commander-in-Chief who is responsible to the Indian Government and not to the British Government". "Our men in India", referred to the British troops there, and among the allegations were shortage of medical supplies, nurses and elementary comforts, doctors and nursing staff, and anti-

malarial measures; books and periodicals were out of date and radio sets practically non-existent. The most dangerous part of the attack was on the Commander-in-Chief (Auchinleck) who had all along been fully aware of the lack of amenities and had continually pressed for more. It may be that the Welfare Staff in Delhi placed orders too late for such items as radio sets (which had to be procured from the U.S.A.) and were blocked by the three services Directorates of Welfare for an incredible time while they argued about design, which had to be for both batteries and mains. Out of the 8000 required only 1200 later became available and one large batch which I had been promised were suddenly diverted, after D-day, to troops in Europe.

As a direct result of these complaints the War Office Director of Welfare (Major General Jardine) visited India and was followed shortly by Lord Munster, Under Secretary of State for India. I do not think the latter had previously been to India, so the size of the sub-continent and the conditions may have been new to him, but he did his job energetically and sympathetically. On his return he held a Press Conference on December 20, 1944. He was satisfied that there was no complacency in high places and that although much had been done in 1944, the standard of welfare was not as high as in other theatres of war. He was satisfied, also, that the medical authorities in India and South East Asia Command had done a good job in difficult conditions, that the sick and wounded were well looked after and there should be no anxiety on that score. He stressed the size of India, that out of 400 million inhabitants there were only some 60,000 Europeans and thus arrangements for suitable buildings for amenities or for private hospitality to convalescents in a suitable climate were extremely difficult. He did, however, stress the point that the men fighting on the Burma front had been neglected by the Press (who were more concerned with the fighting in Europe) a matter which I had been striving, ineffectually, to put right for many months.

The crux of the matter was that until after D-day (June 6, 1944) no one (among whom I include the B.B.C.) would take any interest in India's affairs. This also applied to such organisations as Toc H, Ensa, S.S.A.F.A., Y.M.C.A. and the Salvation Army. Applications for representatives of these organisations to



be sent to India were met by dribblets, apparently the main difficulty being in recruiting personnel from a market where manpower was short. In other words India had to wait until the war in Europe was ended.

During the autumn the "Morale (Far Eastern) Inter-services Committee" met and produced two reports. This was before Lord Munster and Major General Jardine had visited India. I was not invited to attend. It seems that the reports were based on much ill-informed gossip and had a definite anti-India bias from people who had an axe to grind. It seemed clear that Normandy and Italy had been served at the expense of India and South East Asia Commands. These reports had been compiled on a comparatively "low level" but in October the matter was discussed at a meeting with the three Service Ministers. I sat next to Amery in case he should want my advice. It was a most unpleasant meeting and a particularly venomous attack was made on the Government of India, the rancour and ignorance displayed being lamentable. It appeared that the Ministers (the War Office in particular) were trying to throw the blame for shortcomings (mostly their own) on India and thereby escape censure themselves. All this time Amery sat silent. I knew all the answers to the accusations but could say nothing unless he asked me to, which he never did. The final question mooted by a Minister and unanswered was, "How are we going to explain why all these measures we now propose were not taken in hand long ago? I confess I have, as yet, found no answer to this?" I should really have liked to tell him.

As a result a minute was sent to the Prime Minister at once. It contained many items but the main object was to ask the Prime Minister to give a general directive to Service Ministers that, on the Welfare side, the requirements of India and South East Asia Command were to be met, as far as possible, on a high priority.

By this time (Autumn 1944) the Military Department of the India Office, with a serious shortage of staff, was dealing with Army Requirements (Material and weapons), Provision of Officers, Medical personnel and stores, Personal cases (Honours and Awards), Economic and Financial matters affecting the Indian Army, Psychological Warfare, Prisoners of War, Post-war plan-

sites in Holland and the Friesian Islands. Their overall weight was 15 tons with a war-head of between 1 and 2 tons and those that landed made a large crater. But they were very inaccurate and many of them exploded in the air. As their trajectory rose to some 60 odd miles there was no warning of their advent and they arrived unheralded. They were not a serious menace and the last one fell on March 31, 1945.

In due course came VE-day on May 8, 1945 and the end of the war in Europe; on August 6 the first atom bomb fell on Hiroshima, followed by the second on Nagasaki on August 9. VJ-day was on August 15, and during September and October all the Japanese forces in South East Asia surrendered.

There followed the General Election in Britain with a landslide for the Socialists and a new Government under Mr. Attlee. In the political field in India, under the new masters in Whitehall, Wavell discharged a very difficult task with complete impartiality. But a deadlock ensued between the Hindu and Muslim communities who drifted farther and farther apart. As a result Wavell became unpopular with both sides and it became clear that he was losing the confidence of the Government in Whitehall. He, no doubt, knew that withdrawal from India was inevitable but disagreed on the timing and procedure to be followed.

In February 1947, Mr. Attlee in a brief and somewhat curt broadcast announced the decision to withdraw from India by June 1948 and the establishment of the two Dominions of India and Pakistan. The actual timing of the withdrawal was, later, advanced. He also gave news of Wavell's recall in somewhat ungenerous terms and his replacement as Viceroy by Lord Mountbatten. Wavell never complained of the discourteous manner in which his recall was announced and later he was given an Earldom, being appointed Constable of the Tower of London.

I played no part in the final withdrawal from India. I knew quite well the differences which existed between the Hindu and Muslim communities and realised that the setting up of the two Dominions was inevitable, in spite of the economic difficulties which Pakistan was bound to encounter sooner or later. In my own Indian battalion, as in many mixed-class regiments of the Indian Army, Hindus and Muslims worked, played and fought

together in comradeship and friendship. Thus I was greatly shocked by the communal riots which followed Independence, in which many of my friends lost their lives or property. It was not a good start.

In many ways I agreed with Wavell on the timing and process of the withdrawal. It was not that I had, in my own mind, any doubts about the ability of many Indians to play their part, in each Dominion, as statesmen and administrators and maintainers of law and order. Many had had great experience in the Indian Civil Service and the Judiciary as well as in Parliamentary procedure. In other walks of life, as Industrialists, Doctors and Engineers, for example, there were many highly trained and experienced men who could all play their part efficiently. But when it came to the Army I was not so certain and, indeed, that aspect of the withdrawal may well have been uppermost in Wavell's mind. The Army in India, as in other countries, has always been the ultimate weapon of the Government in maintaining law and order (leaving aside external aggression) and it was essential that it should not only be efficient but free from political influences. There would, obviously, have to be a great deal of reorganising of units and administrative services as between the two new Dominions, but that would merely be a question of time. There was, however, another more serious problem.

The slow process of "Indianization" of the officer ranks of the Indian Army had started in 1923, only 24 years before Independence came to India, and it was visualised then that, only in certain selected units would the British officers be wasted out by 1946. By 1945, not a single Indian had reached the rank of full Colonel. The first Indians had only been accepted as students at the Staff College in 1933. Thus, in 1947 the question was whether there were enough Indians, sufficiently trained and experienced, to fill posts as commanders and staff officers in the new regimes. It takes many years of training and experience to build up a General Staff and, on the face of it, the men were not yet available. Thus, in my opinion, at that time, I considered that the army required a further period of at least 5 years of intensive tutelage before it was ready to undertake its full duties, failing which a major breakdown might ensue. It is significant that even in 1944

out through the Gateway of India at Bombay on February 28, 1948. They were presented with a silver model of the Gateway by Sir Maharaj Singh, Governor of Bombay, who at one time had been a next-door neighbour of mine in Simla.

The Curfew on Olympus was complete.

tion for Indians exists, there was never any dearth of men coming forward for voluntary service. For nearly  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years we have been taking in recruits at the rate 50,000 to 60,000 a month. These men have to be clothed, fed, built up physically and mentally, educated, trained and housed. Housing has entailed a very large construction programme since billeting in India is largely impracticable. Units have to be provided with commissioned officers, Viceroy's commissioned officers and N.C.O.s, and these have to be trained. The man himself comes mainly from the bullock cart and the plough, to be converted in a short space of time into a fighting man capable of dealing with motor vehicles, tanks, a multiplicity of modern weapons of war, modern warship equipment and modern aircraft. On the technical side India has had to train and provide innumerable mechanics, drivers of all kinds, wireless operators, armourers, engineer tradesmen, and medical personnel—to mention only a few. In the Royal Indian Navy and Indian Air Force special training problems have been surmounted.

The classes which provided the bulk of the Services before the war were unable to bear this enormous demand, and the recruiting net is now all-embracing. Indianisation of the Officer Cadres, which initially was restricted to certain selected units and later enlarged to cover the units of one division, has been extended throughout the Army and in the other Services. All available sources are being tapped to provide officers and pre-cadet training has been developed. In the Army the proportion of Indian to British officers is now about 35 per cent and is increasing. The problem of providing Viceroy's commissioned officers and N.C.O.s has been a most difficult one, since these come from the same source of supply as the rank and file. The training of instructors of all kinds has been a problem in itself. In order to cope with these various problems, schools of instruction of all kinds for all three Services—from staff colleges and officers' training units, through a great range of technical schools—have been established. A few approximate percentages of expansion as affecting manpower, which have now been considerably exceeded, will give you some idea of the scope of the effort: Armoured Corps 60, Signals 450, Sappers and Miners 300, Artillery 100, Infantry 200, Medical units 320, Ordnance 400, Mechanical transport 1,400, Royal

Indian Navy 1,000, Indian Air Force 5,000. A further call on manpower has been from the Provincial Police and Civil Defence and Fire Fighting organisations.

Early in the war the Royal Indian Navy was reinforced by the addition of vessels taken from the merchant service. These were for immediate needs. The future was provided for by a large-scale programme for the construction of warships in India, the United Kingdom and Australia. The fulfilment of the programme began in 1940 with the launching of two sloops. In the following year the number of launchings rose sharply, India, Australia and the United Kingdom all contributing. In 1942 the number of warships of all classes launched was two and a half times that in 1940 and 1941 reckoned together. During the present year also new construction has steadily been completed and added to the sea-going force.

I cannot leave this aspect of India's part in the war without reference to the assistance given by the *Ruling Princes of India*. Their response to the call has been magnificent. Large numbers of their peoples have been recruited direct into the fighting services, and the military forces and resources of their States have been placed at the service of the King Emperor. They have thus voluntarily shouldered many burdens in the Allied cause. Our Ally, the Kingdom of Nepal, has not only most generously met all our requests for recruits for Gurkha units of the Indian Army, but has sent some 8,000 men of the flower of her Army to India to aid the Allied cause.

Thus, the picture I put before you as regards the fighting services is briefly as follows:

The Indian Defence Forces today are very near the 2 million mark, and nearly 500,000 troops, drawn from all parts of the country, have served overseas since the war started. Recruitment to all arms of the service is being maintained at an average monthly figure of 55,000. The number of officers and men in the Royal Indian Navy has steadily increased, until today it is ten times greater than it was at the outbreak of war. There are also many more ships. The strength of Indian Air Force personnel has increased fifty times since the start of the war, while that of aircraft has risen by 600 per cent.

## THE FIELD OF SUPPLY

*Pari passu* with the preparation of the fighting forces, the expansion of factories and those production agencies which are so essential for supply and maintenance has proceeded steadily. In this field India's contribution to the Allied effort has been prodigious. The supply organisation, which was projected before the war, has now become one of the Departments of the Government of India, and undertakes responsibility for production of all Defence Services requirements. For this purpose it has taken over and expanded the Army Ordnance Factories as well as the Medical Stores Depôts and Mathematical Instruments Office. Its main executive offices are the Directorate of Munitions Production, the Directorate General of Supply and the Directorate General of ship construction and ship repairs. The first two organisations handle between them: Armaments, Civil Armaments, Engineering Stores, Machine Tools, Textiles, Clothing, Leather, Foodstuffs, Timber, Load-carrying Motor Vehicles, Chemicals and miscellaneous stores. In other words, they cover the whole field of supply. In order to co-ordinate the distribution of the resources of India and the various Dominions and Colonies forming the Eastern Group, an Eastern Group Supply Council was set up in India. This enables the maximum use to be made of the existing and potential capacity (other than lethal weapons and ammunition) for war supply of each participating country. The value of these organisations which, through the central and local provision offices, whose task is to forecast future requirements, arrange for the placing of demands and hold and issue stocks, can best be seen from a brief survey of results.

It is not too much to claim that the successes in North Africa redound partly to the efficiency of India's supply organisation and the richness of her resources which, for two and a half years, enabled India to supply all the bulk stores needed. Taking advantage of the shorter supply route, she provided in a steady stream over 1½ million tons of stores, thus releasing much tonnage which the United Kingdom could utilise for supplies to Russia on the other front. The stores ranged from railway wagons to landing craft, electric torches to uniforms. She supplied for the

R.A.F. alone nearly 5 million batteries. Allied troops wore clothes made in India, walked in boots from Indian factories. Nearly 90 per cent of the tents which protected the troops from the torrid heat, canvas and groundsheets which kept pernicious sand out of tanks, planes and motor vehicles came from India. Great quantities of steel structures, landing craft and electrical goods and nearly all of the timber were supplied from India.

Rolling stock, railway material and technical supervision—at a sacrifice to India—which she sent to ports in Iraq and the Persian Gulf, helped to extend port facilities to cope with the vast amount of supplies from the Eastern Group and America which arrived later. The camouflage nets delivered would loop the world eight times over. Fifty thousand stretchers, over a million blankets, over a quarter of a million mosquito nets, over 1,500 different items of medical stores were other supplies to the North African theatre. The 2½ inch bandages would reach nearly 2,000 miles. In one instance, when quotas from the West were lost en route, India hurriedly sent over 7,000 tons of steel, which enabled the vast minefields to be laid to play such an important part in the defensive war in North Africa last year. That is the story of supplies to only one theatre of war. But India supplies several others, including India itself.

The output of many things made in India before the war, from steel to pith hats, is being very greatly increased by multiple shift working, redistribution of plant and personnel, and by actual additions of plant. Advances of this kind are due quite as much to independent industrial enterprise as to official assistance. The aid received in plant, equipment and technicians from the United Kingdom and the United States has been substantial. An overall increase of nearly 50 per cent in the output of steel, considerable stimulation of the non-ferrous metal industries, the increase in output of leather goods, chemicals and drugs are examples of quantitative expansion. New productions include the making, or planning to make, of a number of special steels in India for the first time for tool steel, taps, dies and small tools. Machine tools are now being made, not only in larger quantities but in better qualities. A group of technicians from British factories are helping in this process. Similar basic improvements are being found in



the chemical and pharmaceutical industries. New chemical plants are coming into production, and many of these have production in hand. A rubber reclaiming plant is being established. In the field of munitions 1942 witnessed a further increase in Indian ordnance factories. These factories are aided by a host of feeder engineering factories, over a thousand in number, specialising in components. The production of explosives at the end of 1942 had more than doubled, artillery equipment advanced 30 per cent, small arms ammunition 25 per cent, gun ammunition 50 per cent and light machine-guns 100 per cent. Much has been done to increase the output of explosives, and India's production will play a considerable part in the operations against Japan.

Research in India is directed along three main channels—the production of indigenous substitutes for imported materials to save shipping, the replacement by other indigenous materials of those in short supply, and substitutes for rubber, tinplate, and bitumen, to name only a few. Production from indigenous material of hydraulic fluid for vehicles and aircraft, mineral and graphite greases, self-sealing tanks, rust preventives, camouflage cream and aircraft dope are some of the latest achievements. With the co-operation of non-official scrap committees, coffee grounds are now used in the production of plastics. The Supply Development Committee, constituted in 1941, at General Headquarters, is composed of departmental chiefs, military and civil, and it works in close collaboration with industrialists and scientific institutions, chief amongst which are the Board of Scientific and Industrial Research and Tata's Research Institute.

### CONSTRUCTION AND TRANSPORT

I have already mentioned the enormous construction necessary in connection with housing. But that is only one facet of the construction programme which has taxed India's resources to the utmost. To cope with this, not only the Military Engineering Service, but the Central and Provincial Public Works Departments have been fully extended. A very large programme of factory, storage, airfield, road, railway and dock construction has had to be undertaken as well as Air-Raid Precaution work on a considerable

scale. This has entailed not only the provision of large quantities of material, such as bricks, cement, timber and steel, but fabrication and transportation.

The transportation problem, in itself an enormous one, has been complicated by the generous supply by India of locos and rolling stock and track for Allied needs; by the aggression of Japan which restricted coastal shipping in the Bay of Bengal; and by damage caused during the internal disturbances in the autumn of 1942. The magnitude of India's internal effort in the fields of construction and transportation has, I think, never been fully realised.

In so short a survey I have had to leave much ground uncovered, but what I have said will, I hope, give you some small idea of India's part in four years of war.

#### WHAT INDIA HAS DONE

I feel that there is an impression that India has been living in comparative peace and lethargy and has done little commensurate with her size and resources. I have endeavoured to remove that impression. It is true that she has not had the close experience of war which has fallen to the lot of the United Kingdom. On the other hand, she has experienced bombing in some areas and the dangers of invasion in the early months of 1942 were very real and pressing. Moreover, in the autumn of that year she passed through a period of great internal turmoil.

It is not, I think, generally realised what a great burden has been carried by the retiring Viceroy or the credit which is due to him, not only for the soundness of his preparation of the foundations of the war structure in pre-war days, but for the manner in which he has guided the growth of the edifice through four years of war. India's Commanders-in-Chief throughout this period have had a heavy load of responsibility, for it is they who have had the immediate direction of the expansion of India's fighting forces, the responsibility for her defence, and for meeting the many external calls occasioned by the varying fortunes of the war.

But below those in supreme command come many who in subordinate positions have had to implement the plans and put into

effect the orders given. It has meant for them long hours of daily work in adverse climatic conditions with few amenities, many disappointments and little relaxation. In this category are the men who produced the pre-war framework and have remained to see the edifice constructed. Below them are the rank and file of the fighting services whose keenness in training and desire to get to grips with the enemy have never flagged; the police, whose tasks have been multiplied, and whose devotion to duty on which so much depends is so often forgotten; and the host of civilian workers, on the railways, in the factories and in other spheres connected with the war effort, without whose whole-hearted co-operation little progress could have been made. Last but not least are those men and women who with service and money have aided the Red Cross, and Red Crescent Organisations, and provided comforts for the Services. All these have contributed their humble share to the forging of a great weapon which will play a large part in the future operations against Japan. Contributions to the Viceroy's War Purposes Fund up to the end of July totalled over £6½ millions.

It is hardly necessary for me to remind you of the achievements of the fighting forces which India has produced in this war. I would ask you to consider the casualties incurred by India's fighting Services as a whole. These up to June, 1943, were: Killed, 5,618; wounded, 13,084; missing and prisoners, 85,178. A total of 103,880.

The exploits of the Indian Army in Abyssinia, Libya, Tunisia, Syria, Iraq and Iran are known to all the world. Men of the Royal Indian Navy have shown their mettle on every occasion on which they have met the enemy on the high seas, while the Indian Air Force has given a foretaste of its fighting qualities in action against the Japanese. There is still much fighting for these forces to do both to the west and to the east. Up to now India's men have had their main opportunities to the westward, in theatres where the climate and the terrain come more naturally to them. To the eastward lies a terrain of jungle and swamps and a specialised type of fighting which is as strange to them as it is to their British and Allied comrades. That they will rapidly adapt themselves to that type of terrain and warfare I have no doubt. I have no doubt,

also, that, just as India's fighting men have shown themselves the equal, if not the superior, of the Axis troops in the Mediterranean theatre—and thereby contributed to the ultimate Axis collapse—so they will get the measure of the Japanese and play their full part by land, on sea and in the air, with their British and Allied comrades, in the ultimate defeat of Japan.

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